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XXIII.—THE YOUNG MAN BETROTHED TO
A STATUE

I

One of the many interesting stories current in the Middle Ages is that of a young man who puts his marriage ring on the finger of a statue of Venus and is surprised to find that the image, taking the matter *au sérieux*, jealously forbids him the embraces of his earthly bride. Its relation to a large group of miracles of the Virgin has been frequently noticed (for example, by Mussafia¹ and by Ward and Herbert²); it has received some attention from students of Mérimée as the source of his *Vénus d'Ille*; and Massmann, in his edition of the *Kaiserchronik* (1849-1854) collected a large number of variants (together with

¹ *Studien zu den mittelalterlichen Marienlegenden* in *Wiener Sitzungsberichte*, i (CXIII, 1886, Heft 2, pp. 917 ff.; ii (CXV, 1887, Heft 1, pp. 5 ff.; iii (CXIX, 1889, Abh. 9); iv (CXXIII, 1890, Abh. 8); v (CXXXIX, 1896, Abh. 8); reprinted separately, Heft i, 1887, ii, 1888, etc. My references below are to the *Sitzungsberichte*.

² *Catalogue of Romances*, London, II, 1893, III, 1910.

an almost equal number of faulty references). But Graf³ is the only scholar who has studied it in any detail, and his treatment is far from complete. I propose here to bring together the scattered materials of previous students, both of the story of the ring-betrothal to the Venus statue and of the Virgin miracle. I shall add no new versions of either story, but I shall discuss the former from a point of view radically different from Graf's, and shall endeavour to follow the tale from its obscure beginnings before William of Malmesbury, through its adaptation as a miracle of the Virgin, down to some of its present literary forms.

The materials and motifs of which the Venus story is composed are various, partly primitive folk-lore, and partly classical, post-classical, and early mediæval tradition; but there is no direct evidence for dating the full-formed narrative earlier than about 1100. The earliest known version is that of Malmesbury,⁴ who introduces it

³ Arturo Graf, *Roma nella memoria del medio evo*, Torino, 1883, vol. II.

⁴ A. P. Villemain, *Histoire de Grégoire VII*, Paris, 1873, I, pp. 273-5, relates the story and assigns it to Ekkehard of the tenth century—presumably, therefore, Ekkehard I of St. Gall. Villemain cites Hermann Corneri, *Chronicon III apud Ekkardum* [Johann Georg von Eckhart, *Corpus Historicum Medii Ævi*, Leipzig, 1723, II, col. 587-8]. Aug. Filon, *Mérimée et ses amis*, Paris, 1894, pp. 97 ff., follows Villemain, and pp. 358-60 reprints, with slight omissions, Korner's version. Now Korner, a Lübeck chronicler who died about 1437-8, does assign the story to Ekkehard; but Korner was notoriously reckless about citing authorities; "sehr unzuverlässiger Compiler," says Potthast, "besonders in Rücksicht seiner Quellenangaben." The principal books that he actually followed were Henry of Herford's *Liber de rebus memorabilioribus*, Vincent de Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*, and the *Chronicon pontificum* of Martin von Troppau. From the first of these he largely acquired the habit of loose citation, and (what interests us chiefly here) derived his practice of ascribing this and that to a vague "Egghardus." His references to Vincent de Beauvais, however, are usually correct; and since he names Vincent in his sentences preliminary to the Venus

simply with the phrase: "ut Romam revertar," and gives no hint of his source. Indeed, wherever he learned it, he must have felt that it was too good a tale to be omitted, and with characteristically mediæval unconcern for a reasonable pretext, he inserted it in his *History* when it occurred to him, assuming—and properly, of course—that no apology was needed.⁵

At Rome there was a wealthy young man of noble birth, and newly married, who was accustomed to entertain his friends with frequent feasts.⁶ One day as they went out into a field to settle their dinner by playing ball he took off his marriage ring and put it on the finger of a bronze statue of Venus nearby. When the game was finished he found the statue's finger so bent that it was impossible to withdraw the ring; nor could he break the finger. He said nothing to his companions about it, but that night went back to the image with a servant; and found the finger again straight and the ring gone. Still concealing his loss, he returned to his wife, but as he got into bed he felt come between him and his wife "quiddam nebulosum et densum, quod posset sentiri, nec posset videri." Then the phantom spoke: 'Lie with me, whom you have married today. I am Venus, on whose finger you placed your ring, and I will not give it back.'

Some time elapsed, during which the youth was prevented by the

story, it is more than likely that he took his version from the *Speculum Historiale* xxvi, 29, and threw in the "secundum Egghardum" a couple of times perhaps as make-weight, perhaps merely for variety's sake. At all events, nothing can be gained by using his phrase as warrant for a literary version of the Venus story before William of Malmesbury. It does not occur, of course, in the Waltharius of Ekkehard I; nor in the *Casuum S. Galli continuati* I of Ekkehard IV; nor in the chronicles of Eccehardus Uraugiensis. (On Korner cf. especially *Die Chronica Novella des Hermann Korner*, ed. J. Schwalm, Göttingen, 1895, pp. xviii ff.)

⁵ *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, Rolls Edition (ed. Wm. Stubbs), London, 1887, I, pp. 256-8 (Book II, §205); Pertz, *Mon. Hist. Ger. Scriptores*, X, p. 471.

⁶ One of the manuscripts has glosses giving the youth's name as Lucianus, and his wife's as Eugenia, which were incorporated in later manuscripts. "These glosses," says the editor, "would seem to show that the story existed in another shape as late as the thirteenth century." But this is not a certain inference.

statue from intimacy with his wife; until finally, aroused by her complaints, he related the whole affair to his parents; and they in turn laid the matter before Palumbus, a certain "presbyter suburbanus," skilled in necromancy. Palumbus, incited by promise of a considerable reward, wrote a letter and gave it to the youth, saying: "Vade illa hora noctis ad compitum ubi se findit in quadrivium, et stans tacite considera"; a company of both sexes, of all ages and conditions, on foot and on horse, some merry and some sad, will pass by, but you must maintain silence. They will be followed by a man "statura procerior, forma corpulentior" than the rest: give him the letter, and he will do forthwith what you wish.

It all happened as the priest said. Among the procession was a woman "ornatu meretricio" riding a mule; "crinis solutus humeris involitabat, quem vitta aurea superne constrinxerat; in manibus aurea virga qua equitaturam regebat; ipsa, pro tenuitate vestium pene nuda, gestus impudicos exaquabatur." The last one was their chief. He gave the youth a terrible look and asked what he wanted. But the young man remained silent and held out the letter. The *dæmon*, not daring to disregard the familiar seal, read the writing, lifted up his hands to heaven and said: 'Almighty God, how long wilt thou suffer the iniquities of the priest Palumbus?' But without delay he dispatched his followers to extort the ring from Venus. At length she gave it up; and the youth regained the long-hindered love of his wife. Palumbus, however, hearing the *dæmon's* cry to God, knew that the end of his days was near, and soon after died a wretched death, all his limbs torn apart—"confessus (adds William) papæ coram populo Romano inaudita flagitia."

About the middle of the thirteenth century Vincent de Beauvais tells the story in his *Speculum Historiale* xxvi, 29, and places it in Rome at the time of Emperor Henry III. From a comparison of Vincent's version with William of Malmesbury's it would seem that the former had William's text before him, which he condensed somewhat, at the same time toning down the rather highflown 'classical' manner. And to these two, William of Malmesbury and Vincent de Beauvais, nearly all the mediæval versions of the story may be directly or indirectly traced.

The English chroniclers draw of course from the former. Ralph of Diceto gives a dry summary of the tale, which he

places in the year 1036.⁷ In the *Flores Historiarum* compiled at St. Albans by John de Cella about 1200 and continued by Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris, the story is dated about 1058.⁸ Higden, under the same date, has a condensed version which he introduces with the rubric "Willelmus de Regibus, libro secundo,"⁹ and in which he uses the names Lucianus and Eugenia found in some of the manuscripts of Malmesbury. Henry of Knighton borrowed from Higden almost word for word;¹⁰ Bromton's version, probably also dependent on Higden, is about twice as long.¹¹ In Fordun's *Scotochronicon*, lib. vii, cap. xxx, the date is likewise 1058 and the text is very clearly abbreviated from William of Malmesbury.¹²

Besides the historians, who copy it more or less automatically, two of the famous mediæval collections of tales contain the story. The *Speculum Laicorum*, composed in England towards the end of the thirteenth century, and usually attributed to John of Hoveden, introduces it by "Legitur in gestis Romanorum," which is doubtless an error for the *Gesta Regum* of William of Malmesbury.¹³

⁷ *Abbreviationes Chronicorum*, in Twysden, *Hist. Anglicanæ Scriptores X*, vol. i, col. 471; Rolls ed., i, pp. 178-80.

⁸ Matthew Paris, Rolls Series, vol. i, p. 527; *Flores Hist.*, Rolls Series, vol. i, p. 577. Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, part iii, sec. 2, mem. 1, subs. 1, in telling the story cites as his source "Florilegus ad a. 1058," probably meaning the *Flores Historiarum*.

⁹ *Polychronicon*, Rolls Series, vol. vii, pp. 200 ff. Trevisa's translation does not alter the story.

¹⁰ Twysden, vol. ii, col. 2335; Rolls Series, vol. i, p. 44.

¹¹ Twysden, vol. i, col. 950.

¹² Ed. Goodall, Edinburgh, 1759, i, pp. 407-8.

¹³ So in MS. Addit. 11284 of the British Museum (Herbert, *Catalogue of Romances*, iii, p. 403, No. 538). In the *Thesaurus Exemplorum*, Fascicule V. *Le Speculum Laicorum*, ed. J. Th. Welther, Paris, 1914, it is chap. lxxx: 'De Sortilegio.' It is printed entire by J. K. Ingram in the *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. ii, ser. ii (1883), p. 140.

As in certain manuscripts of Malmesbury, the Roman youth is named also Lucianus, and his wife Eugenia. The *Alphabetum Narrationum*, written at the beginning of the fourteenth century, formerly ascribed to Etienne de Besançon, but more probably by Arnold of Liège, entitles it 'Sponsalia contrahuntur per anuli tradicionem,' and refers it to William of Malmesbury.¹⁴

In the *Myreur des histors* by D'Outremeuse the story is again taken from William of Malmesbury; but it is remarkable as being told from the point of view of Palumbus.¹⁵

From Vincent of Beauvais's version in the *Speculum Historiale* several copies were made. That of Korner has been already mentioned.¹⁶ In the fifteenth-century chronicle of Johann Hagen, there is a prosaic version which puts the incident in the time of Leo IX, and which differs from the usual account in a few details, principally in having the youth give Palumbus's letter not to the man who closes the procession but to the woman who is dressed like a harlot.¹⁷ In the *Chronica sive opus historiarum* of St. Antoninus of Florence the story is referred directly to Vincent.¹⁸ Delrio, *Disquisitiones magicæ*,¹⁹ Kornmann,

¹⁴ Herbert, *Catalogue*, III, p. 437, No. 90; on the authorship and date of the *Alphabetum* cf. *ibid.*, pp. 424 ff., and the articles by Toldo in *Archiv. f. Stud. d. neu. Sprachen*, 1906-7. In the fifteenth century English translation it is No. DCCXXX (ed. Mrs. M. M. Banks, EETS, pp. 488-9). In the Catalan translation (Barcelona, ?1888) it is No. DCXXXVIII, vol. II, p. 255.

¹⁵ Ed. Brussels, 1864, III, p. 259; quoted by Toldo, *Archiv*, CXVIII (1907), pp. 79-80.

¹⁶ P. 524, note 4, above.

¹⁷ Printed in Klapper, *Exempla aus Handschriften des Mittelalters*, Heidelberg, 1911, No. 51, pp. 40-1; cf. Klapper's notes, p. 85. Cf. also Klapper's article in *Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesell. für Volkskunde*, XI (1909), pp. 119 ff. (on this story, pp. 132 ff.).

¹⁸ Nuremberg, 1484, Pars II, tit. xvi, cap. vii, §iii.

¹⁹ Second ed. 1604, Lib. III, P. I, Q. iiiii, Sec. viii.

De annulo triplici,²⁰ Simon Maiolus, *Dies caniculares h. e. Colloquia physica nova*²¹ copy Antoninus verbatim. Philo, *Magiologia*, merely translates Miaolus into German.²² The Archdeacon Balthazar Boniface Rhodiginus relates the "jocunda narratio" in Lib. xiv, caput xiii, of his *Historia Ludicra*. The marginal references are to Antoninus and Delrius, but the language does not in the least resemble theirs.²³ E. G. Happel, in his "Grösseste Denkwürdigkeiten der Welt oder so genandte *Relationes Curiosae*," Hamburg, 1687, gives the story under the title of *Die teuflische Venus*.²⁴

Besides the early version of Malmesbury, however, there is an extremely important variant in the *Kaiserchronik*, which was written 1140-50, from a Latin source, and is

²⁰ Ed. 1672, p. 41.

²¹ Third ed. 1614, Colloq. III, 'De Sagis,' p. 618.—P. J. Begbie, *Supernatural Illusions*, London, 1851, II, pp. 76 ff., gives a translation, from 'Dr. Antonius' and Hildebrand, *Natural Magic*, p. 33.

²² *Magiologia*, 1675. I take this from Massmann (*l. c.*, p. 926, n. 1), who adds: "Nach Paulini, Philosophischen Luststunden (1709), II, 1707, sei die Begebenheit unter König Eduard geschehen." I am unable to trace Paulinus.

²³ *Balthassar Bonifacii Rhodigini Historia Ludicra*, Editio nova et tersior (Brussels, 1656). The conclusion will illustrate the author's manner. "Palumbus verò, quem Venus aliàs amorum suorum conciliatorem & paranympum habuerat, veluti desertor ac proditor, & Veneris volucris lasciviente vocabulo indignus, à Veneris administris Dæmonibus dilaniatus ac disceptus interiit. Adderent fortasse ingeniosi fabulatores, inde factum, ut eùm antè Palumbi caro acriter ad Venerem cieret esitantes hujusmodi postea facultate destitueretur."

²⁴ Vol. III, p. 470, Hamburg, 1687. Cf. Koch's edition of Eichendorff in Kürschner's *Deutsche National Litteratur* (146, II, 2), Stuttgart [1893], pp. 157 ff. I have not seen Happel's version; Klapper (*Mitteilungen*, etc., p. 133) describes it as a "fast wörtliche Übersetzung" of William of Malmesbury.

therefore not much later than the *De Gestis*.²⁵ Here the youth is named Astrolabius, and the priest Eusebius.

At Rome there were two brothers whom the Emperor Theodosius could not convert. One day, while they were playing ball, Astrolabius knocked the ball into an enclosure, climbed over the wall after it, and there saw a beautiful statue of Venus that beckoned to him with its hand. He became at once so inflamed with love that he drew a ring from his finger and gave it to Venus as a pledge he would always love her. Meanwhile his friends thought something had happened to him, and having forced open the gate, finally discovered him. But

Mit dem tiuvelē wart er besezzē.
Er nemochte trinken noch ezzē,

nor sleep. He grew pale and sick, and was like to die.

One day, realizing that he was in a critical condition, Astrolabius went to consult Eusebius, the Emperor's chaplain, and obtain his help. In the youth's presence one morning Eusebius read from a certain book and commanded the Devil to bring back the ring within half an hour. The Devil replied, however, that it belonged to his companions and he could not himself return it. Then take me thither, said the priest; and the Devil carried him three hundred miles "in einis tiefen meres grunt," and told him there were two rings, and he must choose the right one. Then the priest charged the Devil *in verbo Domini* to say what stone was in the ring. Jasper, replied the Devil. And so Eusebius chose the right one, and obliged the Devil to take him back to Rome and to confess why he had tempted Astrolabius. The Devil explained that the heathen had wrought a statue in honor of Venus and had placed under it an herb of such magic power that whoever looked upon the statue must fall in love with it. Thereupon the Devil was released; the statue was at once taken down; the young man regained his health, and Pope Ignatius consecrated the statue to 'good Saint Michael.' Astrolabius, and many others with him, were baptized.

This version occurs again, in all important details the same, in Ecko von Repkau's chronicle, *Der Koningē*

²⁵ H. F. Massmann, *Der Keiser und der Kunige buoch, oder die sogenannte Kaiserchronik*, Quedlinburg und Leipzig, II, pp. 264 ff., vv. 13102 ff.; also in *Monum. Germ. Hist., Deutsche Chroniken*, I, pp. 319-23.

Buoch, written in the second quarter of the thirteenth century;²⁶ but with this single exception it remained an unproductive variant. That it *is* a variant, and not the primitive form of the story, goes, I think, almost without saying. It is a tale of magic—black magic and the Devil—pure and simple. The conception of the implied contract sealed by the marriage ring, fundamental in Malmesbury's version, is here subordinated and obscured. But until more is learned of the sources of the *Kaiserchronik*, or earlier forms of the story are discovered, nothing can of course be absolutely proved.

I take therefore for the purpose of analysis William of Malmesbury's version, as being presumably the nearest we can get to the original form of the story. The various ideas which it contains are intimately related, but are easily distinguishable. The most obvious is that of a statue endowed with the human attributes of motion and speech; and at the same time, as representing the goddess Venus under certain aspects, with a jealous and malevolent temperament. The figure of Venus here is a union of a statue as such and a demonic supernatural being; or rather, a supernatural being who appears to mortals in the form of a bronze statue. Perhaps one should also reckon as a subsidiary motif, the rôle of the goddess in love with a mortal; but although this familiar idea may have had a suggestive influence in the origin of the story, yet here the attitude of Venus to the Roman youth is not one of real love, but of jealous ill-will. The fundamental conception of the story is that of the ring as a symbol of marriage or as a promise to marry. A motif of secondary importance is the letter (from Palumbus) to the Devil; and similarly of less intimate relation with the central idea is the Wild

²⁶ Vv. 13103 ff.; Massmann, *l. c.*, p. 928.

Hunt, which appears as the nocturnal procession met by the Roman youth at the crossroads. Finally, the whole action is set against a background of contending Christian and pagan forces.

Venus is no longer the resplendent goddess of the classical pantheon, but is debased to the position of a malevolent spirit, a demon. Palumbus, on the other hand, appears to be part heathen and part Christian. He is a "suburban priest," but has direct dealings with the Devil. He is one of those transitional anomalies in which the two religions were for a time blended, on one side a minister of the black arts, and on the other a priest of the church. Nor is the distinction of the two faiths clearly maintained in the rest of the story. There is no definite indication who is meant by the *dominus terribilis* of the nocturnal band who receives the letter and forces Venus to relinquish the ring, but the implication is strong that he is the Evil One himself. At the same time, however, he raises his hands to heaven with a kind of prayer to the *Deus omnipotens*, and this prayer, or curse, seems to be the immediate cause of the horrible death of Palumbus. Does the Devil pray to God to destroy His minister, because he has power over the Devil? Then it is peculiar that God should grant the prayer. But Satan beseeching Heaven for protection against his own kind would cut a poor figure indeed. Certainly he would hate the necromancer whose magic he cannot escape; and perhaps one may suppose that poor Palumbus in his double rôle is bound to suffer either way. Again it seems clear that the 'hero' of the tale is an unconverted Roman, and that his parents (or his wife's) seek out Palumbus because of the latter's skill in the black arts. At any rate, it would be easy to overestimate the amount of Christian feeling in the original version of the story, whatever that may have been precisely; for there is

nothing, even in William of Malmesbury, beyond the address to God Almighty, who visits a terrible penalty on Palumbus seemingly for his command to the Devil, but perhaps because of his necromantic practices, and a vague notion that the spirits of evil are in the end thwarted, to certify that the story had a Christian origin or a Christian author. But some feeling of contrast and more between the two religions is evident.

Statues gifted from time to time with human attributes are familiar to all peoples. A few illustrations will suffice. There is an oriental belief that statues are in truth human beings which lack the soul to give them life and intelligence.²⁷ Something of the sort may be implied in the tradition that God moulded man first in clay and then breathed life into him. Statues that perspire are extremely common.²⁸ Statues have also been known to weep, to brandish their arms, to bow, and so on.²⁹ Lucian tells of one which used to play strange antics.³⁰ Herodotus (v, 85) relates how the Athenians could not get their old images back from Ægina; and there is a similar tale of an Indian god in South America which the Padre brought to his convent, but it twice returned to the moun-

²⁷ Cf. Sébillot, *Superstitions iconographiques*, in *Revue des Traditions Populaires*, II (1887), p. 17; and Wm. Crooke, *The Binding of a God*, in *Folk-Lore*, VIII (1897), p. 336, who cites Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, I, p. 114, n.; IV, p. 1320. For talking statues cf. L. J. B. Béranger-Féraud, *Superstitions et survivances*, Paris, 1896, II, pp. 431-88.

²⁸ Cf. Sébillot, *l. c.*, p. 19, for several references. The newspapers in the spring of 1917, reported a case in Italy, which the peasants interpreted as a favorable omen of an early peace.

²⁹ The idea is still a living one in fiction. In *The National Sunday Magazine* (of the Chicago Sunday Tribune) for June 25, 1916, there was a tale of an active statue encountered by an American soldier at Aden.

³⁰ Harrison, *Mythology and Monuments of Athens*, p. 517 (Crooke).

tains.³¹ The adventures of Pygmalion and of Don Juan are, of course, familiar. Lucian tells of a Venus statue beloved by a mortal;³² and the same motif has persisted apart from the tradition of the Venus story, down to Oscar Wilde's *Charmides*. But although Graf has suggested that the mediæval Venus in love with the Roman youth may be a reminiscence or reflection of the ancient goddess in love with Adonis, I do not think that in the Malmesbury story the statue is to be regarded as *loving* the young man. It is likely that the idea of Aphrodite the *ἑταίρα πάνδημος* persisted beyond classical times, and at any rate one would naturally expect Venus, who was in fact the last of the Roman gods to submit to the Christian dispensation, to be chosen for such a rôle as the story requires, not so much because she was of old the goddess of love, as because she had become in later times associated with the evil powers.

Fraw Venus, edle fraw so zart,
ir seind ain teufelinne,

says the *Tannhäuserlied*; and

E Venus une femme, ki esteit de lur regné,
De enfern est reine dame, là ert sa poesté,

says Philip of Thaun in his *Livre des creatures*.³³ Friday,

³¹ Sébillot, *l. c.*, p. 18.

³² *Amores* 14, 17; so also Pliny, Valerius Maximus, and Clement of Alexandria (Graf, II, p. 394).

³³ Graf, II, p. 388, n. 45, who also quotes from a manuscript of the *Escuriale*:

Sub Veneris latere debet nemo latere
Nam male Venere plurima devenere.

"Die alte Minne nämlich," says Eichendorff in the introduction to his *Geschichte des Romans des 18. Jahrhunderts*, "verwandelt sich fast unmerklich in die Frau Venus, die indes noch immer auf Zucht und Treue hält; bald aber wird diese Frau Venus eine Heidin, dann gar schon eine Teufelin, wie im 'treuen Eckart'." On the jealousy of immortals, cf. also the scholion to Theocritus, III, 13.

the day of the week sacred to her, had an ominous significance, which still survives in our superstition about undertaking a journey on that day. And as the demonic goddess of illicit love she ruled a mysterious section of the underworld known as the Mountain of Venus, where Tannhäuser and many another yielded to the lures of the flesh and the devil.

Moreover, the idea of a young man enticed by a wicked spirit in female form is familiar, for example, in the Lamia story. Cæsarius of Heisterbach has two tales in which the Devil appears as a beautiful woman.³⁴ In his introduction to the ballad of Tamlane Sir Walter Scott gives a Finnish tale of a "young man who had been carried away, and, after his return, was removed a second time upon the eve of his marriage. He returned in a short time, and narrated that the spirit that had carried him away was in the shape of a most beautiful woman, who pressed him to forsake his bride, and remain with her;

³⁴ Cf. also the tale of Ameil-à-Pœil in Henricourt et Bovy, *Promenades historiques*, II, p. 223; and Wolf, *Niederl. Sagen*, p. 287. These references I take from Massmann, *op. cit.*, III, p. 923, n. 7. Cæsarius, Dist. v, cap. iv (Ed. Jos. Strange, 1851, I, pp. 279-81) has still another pertinent story. A great magician named Philippus was asked by some Suabian and Bavarian students to make a display of evil spirits. He drew with his sword a magic circle around the young men, warning them on pain of death not to move outside of it. The spirits attacked them and tried to drive them beyond it, then changed to beautiful maidens, one of whom, by holding out a gold ring and by her passionate gestures, enticed a youth to extend his finger across the line. Then the whole crowd of spirits immediately vanished, taking the student with them. His friends demanded him back, however, and moved by their threats Philippus called the Princeps Dæmonum, reminded him of his fidelity, and after some altercation obtained the release of the student; who appeared thin and worn as if from the grave, and told his friends that their studies were displeasing to God.—There is some similarity here also to the relation of Palumbus and the Devil.

urging her own superior beauty, and splendid appearance." ³⁵

The central idea of the Venus story is the placing of a ring on the statue's finger; and in this are involved two distinct notions, one that the ring was a token of betrothal, the other that the mere giving of a betrothal ring was equivalent to marriage. The former notion dates back to the early Romans, among whom it was a custom to give a ring as a pledge or earnest after the conclusion of a bargain; and from this custom probably developed that of exchanging rings as a sign of betrothal. It has not been established, moreover, that rings were used for this purpose by either the Greeks or the northern Europeans, though there is slight evidence that the Hebrews used marriage rings; and thus we are in a position to infer with some certainty that the origin of this story was ultimately Roman.³⁶ This hypothesis is supported by the circumstantial evidence that the earlier versions make Rome the scene of action. The other notion, that the giving of a betrothal ring was practically equivalent to marriage—and that such was a fact is clearly implied by the action of the statue—may have been somewhat later, and appears more likely to have been Christian than Roman. There is a passage in Tertullian which seems to indicate that by the end of the second century or beginning of the third the Church regarded ring betrothal as a valid and lawful contract.³⁷ In our modern times of "raw haste," betrothal has become almost a diversion; but in the earlier sim-

³⁵ *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, ed. T. F. Henderson, 1902, vol. II, pp. 304-6.

³⁶ The conjecture of Massmann, III, p. 923, that the story was of Greek origin because of the name Astrolabius in one of the versions is too slight to be of importance.

³⁷ *Apology*, I, vi.

pler life it was the important contract, of which the subsequent marriage was only a ratification and consummation. The marriage customs of the Middle Ages varied of course at different times and in different localities; there is no need to discuss them in this place, but it must be clear that when the Roman youth put his ring on the finger of Venus, she had a certain technical right to consider it a declaration of love and purpose to marry; and such a declaration was serious and binding. Moreover, the goddess could make the technical plea that his betrothal to her was a precontract which annulled his formal marriage to the earthly bride.

One may reflect that the youth—was he light-hearted and given to whimsical jesting, or rather careless and phlegmatic?—had no serious intention towards the goddess. The answer is that the statue was controlled by a demonic spirit, was in fact an instrument of the Devil, who is always spreading unsuspected nets for the careless and the light-hearted. There is no indication in the William of Malmesbury version that she attracted the youth by her appearance or her attitude. Whatever impulse may have moved him to intrust his ring to her finger, there is never any hint in the story that he looked upon her as a goddess or as a beautiful image. The influence, if there is any, is all in the opposite direction. Venus was not in love with him, but as an agent and emissary of the Devil was lying in wait for whomsoever it might concern; and this particular youth was caught. If he had been of a more pliable nature, a little less devoted to his wife, he might have accepted the *Mecum concumbe* of the statue, and the ending of the story would have been different. But this time the Devil's ace was trumped by Palumbus. And therein lies the moral.

We find nothing, however, in this *leitmotif* of the whole

story, the placing of the ring on the statue's finger, to betray the date of the origin of the tale. The general conception would have been possible at any time after the third century, when Rome had become nominally Christian. The other two motifs mentioned above, the letter to the Devil, and the Wild Hunt, are not integral elements of the story, and so are of no great value in determining its source and origin. After the statue has obtained possession of the ring, the spell can be broken only by its recovery. Since the Powers of Good have always manifested very little inclination to control the Powers of Evil, it is natural that the story-teller should turn to a priest of the black arts for help; and one of the recognized ways of communicating with the Arch-Necromancer is by letter.

The Wild Hunt of Odin belongs to primitive Germanic mythology; it is mentioned, for example, by Tacitus;³⁸ but from its simple origin, probably as a nature myth, it developed a great variety of forms, and in its present variations in European folk-lore it is less a specific motif than a comprehensive type of motifs.³⁹ Moreover, the particular form in which it appears in the Venus story is so different from its characteristic manifestations that one may even question whether the procession witnessed by the Roman youth is properly to be regarded as belonging to the Wild Hunt at all. Such a mixed gathering of all ages and sexes and figures, including the immodest goddess and the terrible-eyed chief who brings up the rear, is unusual even in the extraordinary wealth of variants which the Wild Hunt has come to embrace; and for the tenth century is very unusual. There are, however, several

³⁸ *Germ.*, 43.

³⁹ On the Wild Hunt cf. E. H. Meyer, *Germanische Mythologie*, Berlin, 1891, §§319 ff.

points of comparison which deserve notice. The Wild Huntsman (here the Devil, if we admit the analogy) is often attended by a miscellaneous rout, the *wildes* or *wütendes Heer*, in France the *mesnie furieuse*. Sometimes he is replaced by a man who drives a wagon or chariot.⁴⁰ Crossroads, which are always associated with a mysterious power, are regularly disconcerting to the Wild Hunt.⁴¹ Sometimes, furthermore, the Hunter is accompanied by a woman, Holda, or Holle, the Germanic sister of Venus.⁴² On the other hand, Graf's mention of the belief recorded by St. Augustine⁴³ that witches gathered together at night under the leadership of the Devil, Diana, and Herodias, is extremely pertinent; and we may have here in the Venus story only a reflection of this belief. But whether we consider our miscellaneous crowd of grave and gay, with the *mulier ornatu meretricio* and the stoutish leader who sat in his chariot, as bona fide representatives of the Wild Hunt or not, it must be clearly understood that this nocturnal procession is an incremental ornament of the Venus story, and therefore not eligible as evidence of the date or origin of the story itself. It does not imply that the fundamental notion of a youth betrothed to a statue by a ring is of German make.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ I. e., *der ewige Fuhrmann*, Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 239.

⁴¹ Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. 241. I doubt, however, if in the Venus story any Christian symbolism of the cross (of the roads) as harmful to demons is to be understood.

⁴² Cf. Wolf, quoted below, p. 544.

⁴³ Graf, *op. cit.*, II, p. 396, and n. 57, citing *De doctrina Christiana*, I, 23. I am unable, however, to find this belief mentioned in Augustine's works.

⁴⁴ With this procession one may compare the company which the knight witnesses in the thirteenth-century *Lai du Trot* (ed. Monmerqué et Michel, Paris, 1832); and the vision of Helinandus, *De Cognitione Sui*, cap. XI, XII, XIII (Migne S. L. 212, 731 ff. H.

Communications by letter with evil spirits was not infrequent. In the Greek life of Bishop Leo of Catania, Heliodorus was given a letter by a necromancer and told to climb a tall column in a cemetery, tear up the letter and scatter the bits; he should not be afraid nor climb down at anyone's command; thus he would obtain what he sought.⁴⁵ In the apocryphal life of St. Basil, ascribed to Amphilocheus, a magician gives a man a letter to the devil, with directions to wait by a heathen grave.⁴⁶ With a similar letter Anthemius awaits the Devil on a bridge.⁴⁷ In the *History of Mohammed, Sultan of Cairo*, Shaykh is sent with a letter which he must deliver to the chief of a terrible procession in order to release the Sultan's daughter from a magician's spell.⁴⁸

There are various tales which are of interest here as reflecting analogous ideas, though they do not contain similar incidents, to those of the Venus story. In the Sanskrit *Kāthakoṣa*, for example, a "treasury of tales" which, though modified and edited for the purpose of furthering Jainism, nevertheless contains genuine Oriental folk-lore, there is the following narrative of a man who fell in love with a statue.⁴⁹

Günter, *Die christliche Legende des Abendlandes*, Heidelberg, 1910, p. 86, suggests a comparison with the Irish witch in the twelfth-century legend of St. Coemgenus of Glendalough.

⁴⁵ ASS v, 224 [xx Feb.] (Scheible, *Kloster*, v, pp. 122-3).

⁴⁶ ASS XXI, 949 f. [xiv Jun.] (Scheible's reference, *l. c.*, to vol. xx is wrong).

⁴⁷ ASS XVIII, 55 [xxix Maii] (Scheible, *l. c.*).

⁴⁸ Burton, *Supplemental Nights*, vol. iv, pp. 44-5. In a note (vi, p. 506) Burton compares the Venus story and also the "Lithuanian (or rather Samoghitian)" story of the King of the Rats (Edm. Veckenstedt, *Mythen, Sagen und Legenden der Zamaiten*, Heidelberg, 1883, II, pp. 160 ff.).

⁴⁹ *The Story of the Wise Minister Jnānagarbha* in *The Kathakoṣa*, translated by C. H. Tawney, London, 1895, pp. 148 ff.

The Prince Amaradatta and Mitrañanda came to a garden in the suburbs of Pataliputra, and in the temple the prince beheld a statue. "Seeing that it was very beautiful, he was afflicted with the arrows of Cupid, and was not able to move a step from the spot."^{49a} A merchant comes along, and Mitrañanda asks who had the temple built. "I did," says the merchant, "by an architect named Sûradeva." The remainder of the story (which is rather long) is occupied with the devious and wondrous means by which Mitrañanda obtains possession of Ratnamanjarî, whom the architect had modelled the statue from; and brings her to the prince just as he is about to end his life in despair.

"The incident of the ring in connexion with the ancient goddess," says Baring-Gould, "is certainly taken from the old religion of the Teutonic and Scandinavian peoples. Freyja was represented in her temples holding a ring in her hand; so was Thorgerda Hörgabrúda. The Faereyinga Saga relates an event in the life of the Faroese hero Sigmund Brestesson, which is to the point."

The Earl Hakon and Sigmund went to Thorgerd's temple, and when the earl found he could not remove the ring from the statue, he interpreted it as a sign of the goddess's ill-favor. After depositing a large quantity of silver before her and weeping profusely, he succeeded, however, in withdrawing the ring. This ring he then gave to Sigmund, who promised never to part with it. Later King Olaf converted Sigmund to Christianity and asked him to give up the ring as a pagan relic no longer fitting for him to wear. When Sigmund refused, the King in anger foretold that it would be the cause of his death. And so afterwards it came to pass.⁵⁰

This incident is more directly suggestive than the Venus

^{49a} In the *Kathá Sarit Sâgara* (translated by Tawney, II, p. 600) "Vikramâditya falls in love with a statue, which turns out to be that of Kalingasenâ, the daughter of the King of Kalinga."

⁵⁰ Baring-Gould, *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages*, ed. 1869, p. 226. This story is from *Fornmanna Sögur*, Copenhagen, 1852, II, p. 103 (*Faereyingasaga*, c. xxiii). On a statue that pursues a man who had stolen gold from it cf. *Mitteilungen der schlesischen Gesellschaft für Volkskunde* 13-14, p. 52, which refers to Rohde, *Psyche*, 3rd ed., I, p. 194, and Radermacher in *Gomperz Festschrift*, 1902, pp. 197 ff.

story of the struggle between Christianity and paganism; but it is "to the point" here only in that it tells of a goddess and a ring. Any real connexion is hard to see.⁵¹ That the custom of putting rings upon divine images was not restricted to Teutonic and Scandinavian peoples is obvious from Pliny. "It was the custom at first to wear rings on a single finger only, the one, namely, that is next to the little finger; and this we see the case in the statues of Numa and Servius Tullius. In later times it became the practice to put rings on the finger next to the thumb, even in the case of the statues of the gods."⁵²

Landau, in an article on *Heiratsversprechen*⁵³ gives a number of examples of a young man or maid held, usually by supernatural powers, to a half-hearted or carelessly given promise of marriage; the most important of which here is that of Cydippe.⁵⁴

Acontius met Cydippe in the temple of Artemis and fell in love with her at first sight; but instead of declaring his love he wrote on an apple: 'I swear by the temple of Artemis to marry Acontius,' and let it fall at Cydippe's feet. Her nurse picked up the apple and had Cydippe read the words aloud. Then she threw it away and returned home. Her father had arranged to marry her to another, but when the wedding was about to take place she became seriously ill. The

⁵¹ Graf, *op. cit.*, II, p. 396, says there is no need to seek "such remote origins." Baring-Gould affirms with emphasis, however, that the Venus of the ring story is "unquestionably" the ancient goddess Holda, or Thorgerda.

⁵² Pliny, xxxiii, 6 (Bohn, trans. Bostock-Riley, VI, p. 80).

⁵³ Koch's *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Literaturgeschichte*, I (1886), pp. 13-36.

⁵⁴ Related first by Callimachus; then by Ovid, *Her.* xx and xxi; cf. 'The Golden Apple' in Charles Kent's *Aletheia*, and 'Cydippe and the Apple' in Bulwer-Lytton's *Lost Tales of Miletos*. Cf. also the story of Hermochares and Ktesylla by Antoninus Liberalis (E. Martini, *Mythographi Graeci*, II (1896), pp. 67 ff.); and that of the weasel and the fountain from the Talmud commentary (H. Günter, *Die christliche Legende des Abendlandes*, p. 85).

marriage was postponed, and she at once got better. Again the wedding was planned, Cydippe fell sick, and regained her health only upon its postponement. This happened three times. Acontius learned of it, went to her home, and inquired so eagerly about her that he was accused of magic. But finally the Delphic oracle was asked, and it explained that Cydippe's words, read from the apple, had been taken by Artemis as an oath. Cydippe and Acontius were then married.

In the *Kaiserchronik*, there is also, besides a version of the Venus story, a tale of the Emperor Julian which represents a heathen statue in league with the Devil.⁵⁵

In Rome there lived a pious woman who brought up the young Julian as her son, and when her husband died she entrusted all her property to him. Later when she became in sore need and asked the property back, he swore he had never received it and repeated his oath before the pope. One day the poor woman found in the Tiber a statue which the heathens had hidden there and prayed to every morning.⁵⁶ She scorned the image, but the Devil spoke to her out of its mouth, saying he was the god Mercury, and if she would complain of Julian on the morrow he would be asked to swear by his saints ("uf sinen heiligen"); she, however, should require him to swear by the image of Mercury, and then the god would take care that she received her property back. The woman did as she was directed, Julian took the oath, thrusting his hand into the god's mouth: but he was unable to withdraw it, nor could anyone help him. Julian then promised to return the woman's property.

With this illustrative material in mind, and with the above discussion of the principal motifs of the story, we may now endeavor to draw some conclusion regarding the origin of this tale of the ring placed on the Venus statue. By the nature of the subject we are of course obliged to resort to hypothesis; for I have already shown that there is nothing in the character of the different elements of the story to form the basis of a valid argument. The treat-

⁵⁵ Ed. Massmann, vv. 10649 ff.

⁵⁶ On heathen images cast into rivers and lakes cf. Massmann, *l. c.*, p. 928.

ment of Venus as a demon implies the breakdown of the Roman religion, but that came about rather early. Likewise the use of the betrothal ring is consistent with an early date. But these two reasons would be equally effective down to the twelfth century, when we have the story in written form. Perhaps the resort to the black arts as a means of recovering the ring would suggest a period nearer the Middle Ages proper than the Apostolic Age, but this hint also is of little value. We must therefore leave the question of date *in suspenso*, recognizing that while we have no satisfactory ground for dating the story before the twelfth century, it may well have existed at least four or five hundred years earlier.

Baring-Gould, as I have pointed out, was convinced that the story had a northern origin. Wolf takes a similar position: ⁵⁷

Die ganze prächtig ausgestattete sage, ist echtdeutsch . . . 'Ich bin Venus,' sagt die erscheinung zu dem jungen gemal, aber unsere Venus ist nichts als eine elbenkönigin, keine göttin, denn nicht Holda oder eine ihr ähnliche göttin verlockt sterbliche zu ihrer liebe, wohl aber die königlichen elbinnen, die sich auch in den zuerst betrachteten sagen sämmtlich aus königsblut entsprossen nennen. sie steht darum auch unter einem höhern gebieter, einem gott, der auf seinem wagen sitzend den zug schliesst und für uns kein andrer als Fro sein kann. dass der zug an einem kreuzweg nur gesehen werden kann, dass schweigen dabei beobachtet werden muss, ist ebenfalls rein deutschheidnisch; ebenso die virga aurea der Venus, die mit dem goldstab der Herodias zusammenfällt, und das lang herabwallende haar, welches alle göttliche frauen tragen, und die vitta aurea, die an die stirnbinde, den goldring am haupt der einen Norn und mehrer weissen frauen mahnt.

Perhaps Wolf is right in seeing more of the elf than of the goddess in this Venus, but surely she is still more a demonic spirit than a wicked fairy queen. And though

⁵⁷ Johann Wilhelm Wolf, *Beiträge zur deutschen Mythologie*, Gött. und Leipzig, 1852, II, p. 257.

the Wild Hunt is unquestionably "rein deutschheidnisch," it is fair to object that the Wild Hunt is not an integral part of the story.

The best and completest discussion of the story is that of Graf already often mentioned. It is too long to be quoted entire, but the main points may be summarized as follows. Everything indicates, he says rightly, that the tale is of Italian origin, and there is no reason to doubt William of Malmesbury's statement that in his time it was still current in Rome.⁵⁸ "Venere è un demonio, ma tale tuttavia che, non solo non ha in sè la orridezza, ma nemmeno la consueta ferità e malignità diabolica. Essa è innamorata, e vuol fruire dell' amor suo; non usa nessuna violenza al giovane, nè sfoga l'ira sua sposa; ma si oppone a che il matrimonio sia da essi consumato, e si fa forte del suo diritto, che pretende siale stato conferito dal giovane mediante l'anello. . . . Ora, in questa bella, dolce e aspassionata figura di demonio, che noi ritroveremo di bel nuovo più oltre, splende, o m'inganno, un riflesso dell'antica divinità," that is, of the Venus who loved young Adonis; and "un concetto, direi così benevolo, di Venere, non poteva sorgire che a medio evo avanzato, spenti i ricordi della lunga ed asprissima lotta fra cristianesimo e paganesimo, e ridischiuso il senso al prestigio della bellezza antica." While the religious rivalry was still acute Venus would have been painted in sombre hues. The statue, moreover, is conceived as an idol or image mysteriously bound to the deity it represents, so that the implied promise of the ring must be performed. "Il

⁵⁸ "Hoc omnis Romana regis usque hodie praedicat, matresque docent liberos suos ad memoriam posteris transmittendam," (*Mon. Germ. Hist., Scriptores*, x, p. 472). These words are not in the Rolls edition.

caposaldo della leggenda dev'essere appunto una statua esista in Roma, e nulla v'è che contrasti a questa congettura." Let us imagine then, continues Graf, that there existed in Rome in the eleventh century some such statue as that described by Higden.⁵⁹ While the memory of ancient Rome had not entirely disappeared the statue would be admired for its beauty and at the same time looked upon with suspicion because of its evil associations. Let us imagine also that the felicity of a young married couple who lived nearby was broken by some natural cause, which, however, in the Middle Ages would be regarded as due to evil influence. The statue would be blamed, and since jealousy was a principal ground for the exercise of evil power, the Venus would be said to be in love with the young man and jealous. The incident of the ring might have been true or imagined, and added to give the whole greater consistency. Thus the story would have been formed in a fashion "assai facile e spontaneo."⁶⁰

Against this conjecture of Graf's, interesting and suggestive as it is, there is something to be urged. He is right in assuming that stories of this sort—if not of all sorts—take their origin from a fact or concrete instance. And for this actual point of departure Graf properly chooses a particular Venus statue with its aura of mysterious or demonic influence—though he lays unnecessary stress on the beauty of the statue. But led astray by his

⁵⁹ *Polychronicon*, I, 24.

⁶⁰ Graf, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 392 ff. Graf notices also the motifs of the Wild Hunt and the letter to the Devil. As analogous tales he mentions that of a young man persecuted by a demon (Hector Boece, *Hist. Scot.* Book VIII) and Cæsarius of Heisterbach's account of the necromancer Philippus. The miracle of the Virgin (see below) he treats briefly.

conception of the goddess as being in some fashion in love with the Roman youth, Graf assumes as the complicating incident a sudden disturbance of the conjugal happiness of the near-dwelling couple. For myself, I understand the germ of the story to be the ring-betrothal, and therefore I find it more likely that—if we are to imagine at all a definite event as the starting point of the tale—at some time or other a young man, moved by what impulse soever, did actually slip his marriage ring over the outstretched finger of a statue of Venus. To a person at all gifted with the knack of ‘inventing’ stories such an incident would be full of suggestions; and not the least obvious would be that the statue would expect the implied contract to be fulfilled. There is perhaps an initial difficulty in supposing that the incident would ever have taken place. But given a certain type of young man with an odd sense of humor (such as all of us have) and the thing is not at all improbable. It is interesting to see, furthermore, that the particular motivation of the youth’s removing his ring, which is assigned in the early versions, persists in all subsequent versions, even when Venus had been replaced by the Virgin—the fear of injuring it while playing ball. Now the persistence of this unessential trait is probably to be explained by the fact that it would be hard to invent a better motivation; but one may perhaps go a step further and say that it did not have to be invented at all: it was the fact. The more one inquires into the habits of the inventive imagination among practised novelists and story writers, the more one finds that usually those most charming and effective bits of versimilitude are really not the work of the imagination but of memory. So *à fortiori* one is bound to expect observation and memory to play a still larger part in the stories of the untrained. Hence arises

of course the frequent observation that legends are truer than history.

But it is after all of comparatively little importance to argue the matter too closely. The story may have originated in the manner conjectured by Graf or in the manner I have suggested. And I cannot refuse to admit that sometimes what was an unessential element in the beginning has become in the subsequent development of a story its principal motif. In balancing probabilities of this nature one can easily be too dogmatic.

II

Gautier de Coincy (d. 1236), the famous Benedictine monk of St. Médard, in his enormous collection of rimed miracles of the Virgin tells *Du varlet qui se maria a Nostre-Dame, dont ne volt qu'il habitast a autre*.¹ This story, as will appear at once, is in some fashion an adaptation of the story of Venus and the ring which we have just studied.

Mon livre dist et ma matere, says Gautier, that in front of a ruined church there was an image before which sinners left their offerings. One day a troupe of young men were playing ball near by, among them one who had a ring that his *amie* had given him. In order to avoid all risk of injuring this ring he went to the church seeking some safe place to deposit it. When he saw the statue there so fresh and beautiful, he knelt down and saluted it, and was so moved that "Lady,"

¹ Ed. Poquet, Paris, 1857, pp. 355 ff.; Barabzan-Méon, *Fabliaux et contes*, Paris, 1808, II, pp. 420 ff. There is a separate text of Gautier's version in MS. Harley 4401, of about the middle of the thirteenth century. (Ward, II, p. 720.) There is an English translation of this miracle in *Of the Tumbler of Our Lady and other Miracles*, by Alice Kemp-Welch, London, 1908, pp. 59 ff.

This miracle (or one of its parallels) has been recently translated into German by S. Rüttgers; cf. *Jahresberichte für neuere deutsche Literaturgeschichte*, xxv (1914; Berlin, 1918), p. 422.

he cried, "I will serve you all my life. You are the fairest lady I have ever seen, a thousand times more beautiful than she who gave me this ring. I will forsake her, and love, and its joys, and give you this ring *par fine amor*." He then put the ring on her finger, and immediately she bent her finger so that none could withdraw the ring. He was frightened by this, and told the bystanders what had happened. They all advised him: *lest le siecle*, serve God all thy life and Our Lady Saint Mary. But the days came and went, and soon he forgot Our Lady, so powerful were the eyes of his *amie*; so that finally he was married to her with great ceremony. But as soon as he approached the bridal bed he forgot his desire and at once fell asleep. Our Lady lay between him and his wife, proving her right by the ring, and upbraiding him for his disloyalty. The clerk awoke in terror, but finding no trace of the image near, he supposed he had been deceived by a dream. Still he could not arise. Then Our Lady reappeared and again angrily chided him. In despair he implored the Holy Spirit to aid him; he forsook the world, and became a monk and a hermit and a servant of God and of *Ma Dame Sainte Marie*.

Gautier's Latin source, which he followed very closely, has been printed by Mussafia² from ms. lat. 18134, fol. 153, of the Bibliothèque Nationale: *Exemplum de clerico qui anulum suum in digito ymaginis beate virginis posuit, promittens ei quod omnium mulierum amore abiecto ipsam solam amaret*. Gautier wrote his miracles about 1220-30. We may assume, then, without yielding overmuch to the prevalent temptation to date a story earlier than the evidence actually warrants, that this miracle of the Virgin was in existence in the first quarter of the thirteenth century, perhaps even by about 1200.

A little later in the thirteenth century Vincent of Beauvais repeats the same story in his *Speculum Historiale*, vii,

²Über die von Gautier de Coincy benützten Quellen, Wien, 1894, (*Denkschrift der K. Akad. der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Cl. XLIX), pp. 35-7. See also Mussafia's *Studien in Wiener Sitzungsberichte*, Heft i (*Sitzungsberichte*, cxiii (1886), p. 986, no. 49). The same text, says Mussafia, is found also in lat. 2333A, fol. 66.

87, in more pedestrian language³—the language of Gautier's Latin source is extremely flowery—and in about one-third the space, but preserving all the essential details. This, however, as well as nearly all the other versions except Gautier's, omits the statement that the image of Mary was standing before a ruined church to attract alms. Vincent says that he took the story "ex Mariali Magno." This work has never been identified,⁴ but the same miracle occurs in various thirteenth-century manuscript collections of Mary legends, some of which Vincent may have known.⁵

In the last quarter of the thirteenth century Jacob van

³ Reprinted by Massmann, III, pp. 924-5.

⁴ Cf. *Histoire littéraire*, XVIII, p. 321, and G. F. Warner in the Introduction to his edition of the Miracles of Mielot (Roxburghe Club, 1885).

⁵ Among these may be mentioned Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 12593 (*olim* St. Germain, lat. 486) no. 29 (Mussafia, Heft i, p. 962); Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 17491, no. 67 (Mussafia, i, p. 979); Charleville 168, no. 2 (Mussafia, ii, p. 49); Vatican, Reg. 33 (= Vinc. de Beauvais; Mussafia, ii, p. 53); British Museum Addit. 15723, no. 7 (Ward, II, p. 626); British Museum Addit. 17920, no. 9, published by J. Ulrich, *Miracles de Notre Dame en Provençal (Romania, VIII (1879), pp. 12 ff.)*. Mussafia (*Romania, IX (1880), p. 300*) showed that the source of this Provençal collection was identical with Vincent de Beauvais VII, 81-95. Ulrich cites MSS. Arundel 346, fol. 64v and Addit. 11579, fol. 11^a as the original of Addit. 17920, no. 9; but incorrectly, for these two contain the Clerk of Pisa story; see below, p. 552.

The following variant is of interest: Bibliothèque Nationale fr. 1805, fol. 36v, *Du clerc qui donna l'anel a une femme, laquelle espousa*, which contains the peculiarity, says Graf (*op. cit.*, p. 401, n. 66) that "il giovane chierico, destandosi, trova la Vergine coricata fra sè e la sposa, come il giovane romano trova Venere."

In the first of the MSS. listed above (Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 12593) the story is entitled *In antiquis temporibus factum de imagine genitricis Dei miraculum*. It begins "Erat quaedam ecclesia in qua imago . . ." Mussafia calls this version SG 29; the others in the above list are probably not identical, but are indicated by Mussafia as "=SG29."

Maerlant told the story, with no important variation, in his *Spigel Historiael*, VII, 61.⁶ His source was Vincent of Beauvais. And at the very end of the century, or the beginning of the fourteenth, Arnoldus, the author of the *Alphabetum Narrationum* copied Malmesbury's version,⁷ condensing and making considerable changes of language, especially towards the end, but not altering the story.

About the middle of the fourteenth century Johannes Gobii Junior included a crudely condensed version in his *Scala Celi* under the rubric *Virgo dei genetrix*. "Legitur," he says, "in Mariali Magno quod . . ."; but whether he drew directly from the mysterious *Mariale Magnum*, or from Vincent de Beauvais is not certain.

A collection of miracles of the Virgin in the language of Christian Abyssinia also contains this story; and from the fact that it places the image of Mary in front of a ruined church to attract contributions it must represent Gautier's version, and indeed apart from the rather elaborate Oriental manner of the telling it follows Gautier or his Latin source very closely.⁸

Sebillot⁹ gives a version from *Curiosités de l'histoire du vieux Paris*, pp. 53-4, which resembles Gautier's except that the image stood before the cathedral of Paris while it was under reconstruction about 1170.

⁶ Ed. Clignett and Steenwinkel, Leyden, 1785, II, p. 213; extract in Massmann, III, pp. 925-6.

⁷ Cf. Ward-Herbert, III, p. 424, and (for the contents of the *Alphabetum Narrationum*) Toldo's articles cited p. 528, n. 14 above; also Mussafia, iii, p. 45, no. 15. In the fifteenth-century English translation of the *Alphabetum* this miracle is no. 656 (ed. Mrs. M. M. Banks, E. E. T. S., p. 438).

⁸ Bibliothèque Nationale ms. éthiopien 2, fol. 101, of the sixteenth century. A French translation is printed in the *Revue bleue*, 23 octobre 1875, pp. 399 ff., by Maurice Vernes.

⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

The Clerk of Pisa. The story of the Clerk of Pisa is probably one of the earliest and, if we may judge from the number of manuscripts in which it is found, one of the most popular of the countless miracles of the Virgin. It is the second last in a collection which Mussafia¹⁰ says was made in the eleventh century, and probably in England. Later manuscripts have it two and three times repeated in the same collection in only slightly different forms. The earlier manuscripts which contain it, however, date from the twelfth century. It may be summarized briefly.¹¹

A canon of the church of St. Cassianus in Pisa was sincerely devoted to the service of Our Lady. When at the death of his parents he became heir of a considerable fortune he at first rejected the exhortations of his friends to marry, but at length consented. During the wedding ceremony he recalled that he had not said his usual prayers to the Virgin, excused himself from his friends, and withdrew to the church; where Mary appeared to him and charged him with infidelity. That night he left his house secretly, no one knew whither, to give up his life to the service of Our Lady.

As a testimony of the popularity of this miracle I give in a footnote a list of some of the manuscripts in which it is found. Not all the versions are identical, of course, but distinct variants are so far as possible indi-

¹⁰ *Studien*, iii, pp. 53 ff. Mussafia calls it HM; cf. also *Studien*, i. HM comprises the first seventeen of a collection of forty-four miracles wrongly attributed by Bernhard Pez, who edited it from a thirteenth century manuscript, to a certain Potho, a monk of Priefling. Cf. Ward, Catalogue, II, pp. 590 ff. The title of Pez's book is *Ven. Agnetis Blannbekin . . . Vita et Revelationes, . . . Accessit Pothonis . . . Liber de Miraculis Sanctæ Dei Genetricis Mariæ . . . edidit R. P. Bernardus Pez, . . . Viennæ . . . 1731*.

¹¹ British Museum ms. Cleopatra C. x. fol. 124; Arundel 346, fol. 64; Royal 20 B xiv, fol. 138; printed by Carl Neuhaus, *Lateinische Vorlagen zu den Altfranzösischen Adgar'schen Marien-Legenden, Aschersleben* [1886-7]. This text is practically identical with Pez.

cated.¹² The story occurs also in the *Legenda Aurea*, cap.

¹² Twelfth century:—Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 5268, no. 12 (Muss., ii, p. 6); Bern 137, no. 14 (Muss., ii, p. 16); Arsenal 903, no. 24 (Muss., ii, p. 76), Pisa not mentioned; British Museum Cleopatra C. x. no. 24 (Ward, II, p. 609); B. N. lat. 18168, no. 16 (Muss., ii, p. 12); B. M. Arundel 346, no. 16 (Muss., ii, p. 12); Admont 638 (Muss., i, p. 947); Reun 16, no. 40 (Muss., i, p. 950).

Twelfth-thirteenth cent.:—Montpellier 146, no. 16 (Muss., ii, p. 12); Oxford, Balliol 240, Book II, no. 16 (Muss., ii, p. 31); Ghent 245, no. 16 (cf. Leipzig 821) (Muss., iii, p. 21).

Thirteenth cent.:—B. M. Addit. 32248, no. 6, twenty leonine hexameters; cf. B. N. lat. 14857 below (Ward, II, p. 698; cf. Muss., iii, pp. 7-13, iv, p. 11); B. N. lat. 17491, no. 77 (Muss., i, p. 979); B. N. lat. 18134, no. 10 (Muss., i, p. 983; B. N. lat. 5267, no. 16 (Muss., i, p. 990); Salisbury 97, Book II, no. 41 (Muss., iv, p. 22); Charleville 28, no. 16 = B. N. 5268 (Muss., ii, p. 10); B. M. Harley 3244, no. 100 (Herbert, III, p. 462); B. N. lat. 818, no. 45 (Muss., v, p. 6), this ms. contains also the Marriage of Mary from Gautier de Coincy, the Bachelor of Rome from the *Vie des anciens pères*, and Love won by Black Arts; B. M. Arundel 406, no. 9 (Ward, II, p. 662); Copenhagen Thott 128, no. 15 (Muss., ii, p. 17); B. N. lat. 5562, no. 7, greatly abbreviated (Muss., ii, p. 45); Kremsmünster 114, no. 16 (Muss., i, p. 946); Ambrosiana C. 150, no. 16 (Muss., i, p. 951).

Fourteenth cent.:—B. M. Addit. 33956, no. 27 (Ward, II, p. 674); B. M. Harl. 495, no. 1 (Herbert, III, p. 534); B. M. Arund. 506, no. 30 (Herbert, III, p. 543); id. no. 75 (Herbert, III, p. 546); id. no. 118 (Herbert, III, p. 549); id. no. 194 (Herbert, III, p. 555); id. no. 230 (Herbert, III, p. 558) (Note: the last four are slightly different from the type); B. N. lat. 2333A, no. 80 = lat. 17491 (Muss., i, p. 981); Toulouse 478, no. 10 (Muss., ii, p. 18); B. N. lat. 10770, no. 11 (Muss., iii, p. 25); Madrid Bb 150 contains *Liber Mariae* by Gil de Zamora, a friend of Alfonsus X,—Clerk of Pisa, chap. v, no. 9; B. N. lat. 14857, no. 6 (Muss., iii, p. 9); Salzburg. St. Peters a, v 3 (Muss., i, p. 950).

Fourteenth-fifteenth cent.:—Metz 612 = B. N. lat. 14857 (Muss., iii, p. 9).

Fourteenth-fifteenth cent.:—Metz 612 = B. N. lat. 14857 (Muss., ii, p. 76); Florence Laurentiana, Conventi soppressi 747, D. 3 = Arsenal 903 (Muss., ii, p. 76); Vatican 4318 = Metz 612 (Muss., iii, p. 9 = Munich Lat. 4350 = Erfurt (Muss., iii, p. 15).

Cf. also Erfurt 44 (according to Kritz), Munich 4350, Munich 4146 (Muss., iii, p. 15); Cambrai 739, no. 13 (Muss., i, p. 976); B. M. Royal 20 B 14 and Addit. 18364 (Warner, Mielot, pp. xi-xii;

cxxxi; ¹³ in Gautier de Coincy; ¹⁴ in the English translation of Etienne de Besançon's *Alphabetum Narrationum*; ¹⁵ and in the collection of dramatized miracles published by Gaston Paris and Ulysse Robert as *Miracles de Nostre Dame par Personages*, ¹⁶ where the treatment is rather elaborate.

A variant called the *Clerk of Rome*—"Clericus quidem Rome . . . de nobili genere natus"—occurs in several manuscripts ¹⁷ in which the story is "given in great detail, and the husband declares his final resolve in the words 'Quicumque ex parentibus meis vult, accipiat meam conjugem, quia amplius non habebo aliam nisi beatam Mariam, cui semper servire desidero.' The wife then returns to her father, and the husband consults the pope Severinus (A. D. 638-640), ¹⁸ who bids him give all he has to the church in which he saw the vision and to become a monk there." ¹⁹

Mussafia and the Ward-Herbert Catalogue distinguish as a separate miracle a story which we may here regard as a variant of the Clerk of Pisa type, namely the *Neglected Mary Image*. It is indeed hardly more than

B. N. fr. 819; id. fr. 820; Toldo, *op. cit.* p. 81, n. 1; Poncelet, *Miraculorum b. v. Mariae . . . index in Anal. Boll.*, **xxi** (1902), 301, no. 866.

¹³ Ed. Graesse, p. 592.

¹⁴ Ed. Poquet, Paris, 1857, p. 627, *Du clerc qui fame espousa et puis la lessa*.

¹⁵ Ed. M. M. Banks, (EETS, London, 1904-5), no. ccclxv, p. 317.

¹⁶ Vol. III, 1878, pp. 137 ff.

¹⁷ E. g., Harl. 2851, fol. 87^b, no. 11, ca. 1300 (Ward, II, p. 671); Addit. 11579, fol. 11, no. 19, early fourteenth century (Herbert, III, p. 529); Royal 8 F VI, fol. 22^b, no. 55, toward the middle of the fifteenth century (Herbert, III, p. 680).

¹⁸ "Beatus Zepherus" (St. Zephirinus, 202-218) in Harl. 2851 (Ward, II, p. 671).

¹⁹ Warner, *op. cit.*, p. xii.

the same story in different language and unlocalized, and may even have been the original or primitive form of the Clerk of Pisa. A version in Latin prose may be found in the twelfth century collection of *Sermones de Tempore* published by Klapper;²⁰ and one in German verse of the second half of the thirteenth century, in Pfeiffer's *Marienslegenden*.²¹

A similar story appears in Mielot's collection of Miracles, No. ix;²² and in a longer version, No. xx, the Virgin, after he has signified his wish to forsake his earthly marriage for her, stretches out her hand, saying 'Come with me'; and he is suddenly transported to another land, where he leads an exemplary life in her service.

De Vooy's gives a curious variant: 'Van ene clerc die onse lieve vrouwe trouwede mit enen rinc.'

Two clerks returning from school meet a girl, who gives one of them a ring. The clerk puts his ring for safe keeping on the finger of a statue of Mary, but is unable afterwards to get it off. Later he marries the girl, but on the wedding night Mary appears to him and cries scornfully: "Hout, hier is dijn rinc, ontrouwe dienre ende vuyle, snode mensche! Hier is dijn rinc weder, daer du mi dijn trouwe mede gaveste, doe du seitste dat ic scoenre was ende suveliker dan si." At first he thinks it is a dream, but the Virgin strikes him twice on the face; he begs her forgiveness, becomes a hermit, at length regains her favor, and at the end of his life is taken to heaven.²³

²⁰ Jos. Klapper, *Exempla aus Handschriften des Mittelalters*, Heidelberg, 1911 (Hilka's *Sammlung Mittellateinischer Texte*, no. 2), no. 50, p. 40.

²¹ Franz Pfeiffer, *Marienslegenden*, Stuttgart, 1846, no. vii, p. 53. Pfeiffer says the source of the collection was largely the *Liber de Miraculis* [= Pez]. The same poem is printed by von der Hagen in *Gesammtabenteuer*, III, no. lxxxi, p. 508. Cf. *ibid.*, p. cxxv.

²² Warner, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

²³ C. G. N. de Vooy's, *Middelnederlandsche Legenden en Exempelen*, Gravenhage, 1900, pp. 90-1.

In the *Sermo de conceptione B. M.*, wrongly ascribed to Anselm of Canterbury (d. 1109), a clerk who had the rank of deacon and was brother of the King of Hungary in the time of Charles the Great, on his wedding day recalls that he has not prayed as usual to Mary. In the church where he goes to offer prayer the Virgin upbraids him for his infidelity to her, and promises, if he will leave his earthly bride, to be his bride in heaven.²⁴

I add in a note a partial list of the manuscripts which contain the *Neglected Mary Image*. But often it is difficult to make a real distinction between the variants of this miracle and those of the related miracles, and therefore it is possible that some of the items in the list below are out of place.²⁵

The Bachelor of Rome. An extremely interesting, but (I believe) independent adaptation of the Venus story to the mediæval Mary worship is found in the *Vie des anciens Pères*, written about the middle of the thirteenth century.

²⁴ Migne, *Patrologia Latina* CLIX, col. 320; *Legenda Aurea*, cap. CLXXXIX (p. 870). Cf. Mussafia, i, p. 931; Ward, II, p. 609. In the Middle Netherlandish *Legenda Aurea*, *Winterstuc*, fol. 121, *Van een diaken*, the clerk is "des conincs broeder van Zacharien"; cf. C. G. N. DeVooys, *Middelnederlandsche Legenden en Exempelen*, p. 90. In the *Devoet boecken* (MS. Haag L. 50, fol. 82), a Dutch translation of the *Scala Celi*, the same story occurs, says De Vooys (*ibid.*, n. 1), but the bridegroom is "des conincs soen van ungherien."

²⁵ Twelfth century:—B. N. lat. 14463, no. 13 (Muss., i, p. 954).

Twelfth-thirteenth cent.:—Copenhagen Thott 26, no. 27 (Muss., i, p. 971).

Thirteenth cent.:—B. N. lat. 12593, no. 61 (Muss., i, p. 966); Leipzig 819, no. 22 (Muss., i, p. 974); Leipzig 821, no. 27 (Muss., i, p. 971); B. N. lat. 17491, no. 18 (Muss., i, p. 977); B. N. lat. 18134, no. 8 (Muss., i, p. 982); Charleville 168, no. 24 (Muss., ii, p. 51).

Fourteenth cent.: Arund. 506, no. 20 (with variations,—Herbert, III, p. 543).

Cf. also B. N. lat. 16056, no. 29 (Muss., i, p. 960).

It is here entitled *Dun bachelor de Rome qui esposa lymage de pierre*.²⁶ The narrative proper is provided with an introduction of fifty-three verses on the folly and vanity of life.

In a place called the Coliseum, where St. Gregory had had all the heathen images brought, 'li valet bachelor de Rome' were playing ball one holiday; among whom was a rich noble lately married. On joining the game, this youth placed his ring on the finger of an image he saw nearby,—but when the contest was finished he found the finger had closed and he could not recover his ring. At first he was frightened, but he soon returned home and thought no more about it. That night as he was about to embrace his wife, the image interposed itself. Astonished, he arose and made a light, but saw nothing. When he returned to bed the image came back, reproached him for illtreating her whom he had just married and then vanished. In great distress the youth took counsel of his chaplain, who tried by the crucifix and holy water to exorcise the spirit; but the image scorned him, and the Priest, hearing the Devil speak, fled. The following day they consulted the Pope; who counselled the youth to refrain from his wife and keep the matter secret. Thus for a long time he suffered stoically, until one day he heard of a holy hermit far from Rome, and resolved to seek his advice. The hermit bade him persevere in continence and meanwhile devote himself to the service of Our Lady. At the end of a year the Virgin appeared to him and directed him to make a beautiful image of her. But since the making of images was now forbidden by law the Pope urged him to put no trust in dreams. After the vision was twice repeated, however, the Pope gave his approval; and the new statue, by its loveliness, attracted many offerings. Then one day it vanished; the people prayed devoutly for its return; and presently it reappeared—with the young man's ring on its finger. Many unbelievers were converted by the miracle. And thus the youth received his ring, recovered his wife, and henceforth served Our Lady faithfully. St. Gregory commanded images of the Virgin to be made everywhere. Let us all follow the example of this bachelor of Rome, who took good advice and overcame the Devil.

²⁶ Herbert, III, p. 337. Printed by Méon, *Nouveau Recueil de Fabliaux et Contes*, Paris, 1823, II, pp. 293-313. The poem contains 662 octosyllabic lines. A fragment of this tale occurs in a fifteenth-century Swiss manuscript, cf. Tobler, *Jahrb. für rom. und engl. Lit.*, VII (1866), p. 434.

Love Obtained by the Black Arts. A tale very similar to the Clerk of Pisa, but much longer and more elaborated, is that which Mussafia calls *Liebe durch Teufelskunst*.

A certain bishop had a clerk whom he loved and cherished as his own son; and this clerk, who fully returned his bishop's affection, was also very devoted to the Virgin. But the "antiquus inimicus" laid his plans to seduce the clerk. So under the diabolic influence he fell desperately in love with a girl who was already betrothed to a rich young nobleman. Being poor and of low birth himself, he did not dare ask her hand, but he resolved to obtain her love by magic. The evil spirits whom he summoned asked if he would renounce the Son of God and his mother Mary. This he refused to do; but he would agree, he said, to whatever else they might demand. Thereupon they promised to fulfil his wish if he would swear to stand by his word, "quia multi Christiani sic eos deceiverant, quorum vota ipsi saepe impleverant." The demons then took possession of the girl and inflamed her heart with love of the clerk. So mighty was her passion that she threatened to elope if she were not honorably bestowed upon him. Finally her parents consented. But in the midst of the marriage feast he recalled his omission of the usual *sponsus* and *nonae* and asked permission of his guests to perform his due service to Mary. While he was chanting his prayers before her image he fell asleep, and the Virgin appeared to him in a dream charging him with the crime and sacrilege of deserting her for an earthly bride. He then implored her help and favor. She relented. He dissolved his marriage, and after confession and a great penance performed became a holy man; so that when he died a dove issued from his mouth and flew straight upward.

There are two, slightly differing, early versions of this story in Latin, one in prose in the collection of Mary miracles by William of Malmesbury,²⁷ the other in riming hexameters of the twelfth century.²⁸ The former begins:

Eiusdem austeritatis suavitatem pro commissis alter habuit clericus immanius quam iste scelus ausus. Nam cum eum episcopus suus

²⁷ This miracle is printed from Salisbury ms. 97 by Mussafia, iv, pp. 53 ff.

²⁸ Printed by Mussafia, v, pp. 48 ff.; and in Pez, no. xxxv. My summary is based in the main on this version.

tenero et sincero dignaretur amore, omnis ei literature commodum apposit. Quibus dum ille non frivole intenderet licitas artes medullitus insectatus curiositate (ut fit) humana, etiam illicitas attigit. Per quosdam itaque quos dicunt characteres edoctus ad hoc sacrilegii devenerat, ut cuicumque femine etiam luctanti basis raperet, pudorem expugnaret.

The latter begins:

Nunc venite et audite, omnes servi domini;
Volo namque rem narrare, quam a quodam didici,
Ut Maria die sponsa deinceps ab omnibus
Sit amate et laudata, sicut decet, amplius;

and ends:

Ergo ipsa benedicta sit per omne seculum
et det nobis sine fine sempiternum gaudium,
Una secum et cum nato qui vivos et mortuos
Indicabit et extremum et per ignem seculum.

But in the latter version the metrical rhythm is not always preserved. For example, in *Pez*, which is printed as prose, the beginning is—

Huc venite & audite omnes servi Domini. Volo namque narrare, quod a quodam didici, ut Maria, Domini sponsa, deinceps ab omnibus sit amplius amanda & laudanda;

and the ending is—

Ergo ipsa sit benedicta per omnia sæcula, detque nobis sempiterna gaudia una secum & cum Nato suo, Redemptore omnium, qui in fine judicabit omnia, reddens bonis & malis juxta sua merita, cui laus, & potestas in sæcula Amen.²⁹

The popularity of this (originally) metrical version is attested by its presence in a large number of manuscripts. William's version was perhaps less well known.³⁰

²⁹ It is obvious that the rhythm is not entirely lost in the "prose" version of *Pez*; and doubtless many texts which are not strictly metrical preserve it better than others.

³⁰ Manuscripts of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries containing the metrical version are:—B. N. lat. 14463, Brussels 7797,

William of Malmesbury's collection was turned into verse by Adgar, an Anglo-Norman poet of the end of the twelfth century, whose translation is preserved in Egerton ms. 612, of the early thirteenth century; and again by a later Anglo-Norman versifier, whose work is preserved in ms. Royal 20 B xiv. The two French texts are printed by Mussafia in parallel columns and their relations studied in his Heft iv. The variations are mainly in treatment; the story itself is not altered. William, after his narrative is finished continues with some not too relevant moral

7806, Phillips 336, B. N. lat. 12593 (Mussafia's text is based on the first of these, with collation of the others); B. N. lat. 2672, 16056, 17491, 3333A, 18134, 18168, 6560, Montpellier 146, Egerton 612, Arundel 346, Charleville 79, 158 (mentioned by Mussafia, v, but not examined by him); B. M. Cleop. C. x, Vespas. D. xix. (Muss., iii, p. 6; Ward, II, p. 694); Madrid Bb 150 (Muss., iii, p. 28, greatly abbreviated); and a version in 48 distichs occurs in the same ms. of the Amplonian Collection at Erfurt as that which contains the Clerk of Pisa (cf. n. 12 above, and Muss., iii, p. 17).

William of Malmesbury's version is found in the Salisbury ms. and also in Oxford, Balliol 240 (which is practically a copy of Royal 20 B 14,—Muss., ii, p. 32), Camb. Univ. Lib. Mm 6. 15 (slightly different, Muss., ii, p. 39 and n. 4), Toulouse 478 (entirely different text, but from the extract in Muss., ii, p. 29, appears certainly to be based on William of Malmesbury). Warner (introduction to Mielot, p. xviii; Herbert III, pp. 513, 523) mentions Sloane 2478, fol. 5^b and Harl. 2385, fol. 54^b, in prose, which give the title of the book of magic: *Hic incipit mors animæ* (not mentioned by William) and adds at the end that when the clerk died those standing by saw a dove issue from his mouth and rise into the clouds. These two manuscripts seem therefore to show a contamination of the metrical and Malmesbury's versions. Related is B. N. lat. 5562, described by Mussafia thus (ii, p. 45): *Clericus quidem cum esset in arte nigromantie, cujus titulus est hic: 'incipit mors anime,' non mediocriter instructus et de quadam puella esset graviter temptatus, arte sua dyabolum alloquitur.* "Wie ich auf indirectem Weg, mit ziemlicher Sicherheit vermute, zur Fassung von Oxf. III^b 12, Toul. III^c 19 [i. e. Balliol 240, Toulouse 478, as above] gehörig. Die Diction muss aber sehr stark abgekürzt sein."

reflections, and these Adgar translated, while the other omitted them.

Ms. fr. 818 of the Bibliothèque Nationale contains a translation of the metrical version entitled *Du clerc que la virge gita de pechie*. It begins:

Escotez, seignor, et venez,
Vos qui la virgine amez,
Qui el euer l'avez nuit et jor,
La sainte mere de doucor,
Por amor de li suspirez.

The whole consists of 456 verses: a prologue of 44 lines; then the narrative, rather slow-moving; and a conclusion of 29 lines, a sort of hymn to Mary.³¹

Étienne de Bourbon (d. ca. 1261) tells in his *De septem donis* of a clerk who was very devoted to the Virgin, but fell madly in love and wanted to leave the church and marry. The wedding was about to take place, but

voluit prius dictus clericus horas beate Virginis consummare antequam ad mensam accederet; quod cum faceret, sopor irruit super eum, et audivit beatam Mariam conquerentem repudiatam ab eo pro alia. Qui, facti penitens et omnia episcopo confitens, intacta uxore, ad religionem transivit et obsequio beate (Virginis) devotus perseveravit. Et hec in ejus obitu dicitur affluisse, et eum secum suscepisse et duxisse.³²

Here the story is confused, the black magic element is omitted, but the conclusion suggests Love Obtained by the Black Arts more than any of the other miracles.

Mielot has a rendering, Miracle xxv, which seems to be based on William of Malmesbury's version, though it can hardly be a direct translation: *D'un clerc qui delaissa a servir la vierge Marie pour soy marier, au quel sapparut*

³¹ Printed by Mussafia, v, pp. 54-9.

³² *De septem donis*, Paris II, Tit. vi, no. 140 (ed. Lecoy de la Marche, p. 120). Cf. Toldo, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

*la ditte vierge, en tant quil renuncea a sa femme et retourna au service de la glorieuse vierge Marie.*³³

Analogous Miracles. Besides the miracles already discussed, I have noted various stories which are more or less closely related to the main group, and which do not seem to have been so well known or so widespread. The most important of these is the legend of St. Agnes.

Paulinus, sacerdos huius ecclesiae [i. e., Romae], mira carnis temptatione vexabatur, et cum nollet Deum offendere, a summo pontifice petiit dispensationem contrahendi. Cuius bonitatem papa intuens anulum ei cum smaragdo dedit, et iussit ut supra altare in ciborium, ubi picta est Agnetis ymago formosa ascenderet, et ei ex parte papa preciperet ut se permetteret sibi desponsari. Illa continuo digitum anularem porrigens, et anulo suscepto retrahens, omnem tentationem a sacerdote fugavit. Ille qui vidit ymagationem et anulum hoc testatur.³⁴

An interesting medley of several motifs is the story of the knight who, passionately in love with a lady, threatens, when she refuses him, to learn magic in order to obtain his desire.

The lady declares she is not afraid. The knight meets a priest in a little chapel, and relates his purpose. The priest asks if he will abandon his attempt for the sake of a far more beautiful woman;

³³ Warner, p. 20.

³⁴ Bartholomew of Trent (d. 1240), quoted by Graf, *op. cit.*, II, p. 402, n. 69. Same in *Legenda Aurea*, cap. XXIV (Graesse, p. 116). Graf mentions also the abbreviated form in Herman von Fritzlar, *Heiligenleben*, p. 69; *Mirabilia* (ed. Parthey, p. 61) in which the priest is named John and the Pope is Paschasius (same in British Museum ms. Addit. 18347.—Herbert, III, p. 599, no. 2); and the chronicle of St. Egidius in which the priest's name is Leopardus, the Pope's Innocentius (same in Klapper, *Exempla*, no. 52, p. 41). In the English translation of the *Alphabetum Narrationum*, ed. M. M. Banks, EETS., it is no. XLVIII, pp. 32-3. Cf. also Herbert, III, p. 470, no. 57. There is a variant in Etienne de Bourbon, *ed. cit.*, p. 84; cf. Herbert, III, p. 607, no. 18. Klapper refers to *Alem.*, XVII, 14, no. 22.

and the knight admits that he will. The priest then counsels him to pray a hundred and fifty Aves a day for a year: at the end of that time he will have a lady one hundred times fairer than the one he sought before. When the knight has fulfilled his compact he prays to Mary: "Quia sacerdos meus tibi me promisit fore copulandam, veni ut tibi nubere." She puts a ring on his finger, but warns him that when it disappears he will die. Meanwhile he becomes very rich. At the close of one of the banquets he was accustomed to give his friends he prays aloud to God that he may have what he most desires. Suddenly he looks at his finger—the ring is gone. He recognizes, therefore, that his end is near, and relates the whole story to his guests.³⁵

In an Italian manuscript written about 1400 is a rather similar story in Latin.

A "French knight invokes the Virgin's help to win a lady's love; he has a vision of her with the lady, and at once transfers his love to her; he becomes a monk, and has a second vision of the Virgin, in which she gives him a betrothal ring; he is chosen abbot, and soon after a third vision, in which the Virgin rebukes him for letting the cares of office distract him, and withdraws the ring; on his deathbed devils assail him, but the Virgin comforts him and restores the ring, which is preserved 'usque hodie' in the abbey."³⁶

Cæsarius of Heisterbach has a related miracle, in which, however, there is no ring and no vow.

A fine young knight is inspired by the Devil with a passion for his master's wife. Being repulsed, he consults a hermit, who bids him say a hundred aves a day for one year. When the last ave is said, the Virgin appears to him and consecrates their marriage with a kiss. His carnal temptations at once leave him, and soon thereafter he gives up the ghost and enters upon the promised nuptials in heaven.³⁷

Thomas of Cantimpré relates a story which more closely

³⁵ Wright, *Latin Stories*, no. 71 (from MS. Harley 219); Mussafia, ii, pp. 67-8; Herbert, III, p. 52.

³⁶ British Museum, MS. Addit. 11872, fol. 133 (Herbert, III, p. 696, no. 37).

³⁷ Dist. VII, cap. 32; cf. Herolt, *Promptuarium*, no. 27; Mussafia, ii, p. 60, and iii, p. 46.

resembles in its conclusion the Clerk of Pisa and Neglected Mary Image type but belongs to the Hundred Aves group.

A young man who, remaining chaste, squanders his substance in gambling and high living, is advised by his uncle to pray fifty, a hundred, a hundred fifty aves daily for three years; then he will find a bride. The uncle's prediction comes true, but at the wedding feast the young man recalls that he has not offered his usual prayers. In the church Mary appears with a book of a hundred and fifty aves written in gold letters, and tells him he will die in three days. He returns to the feast, recounts his vision, and then leaves his bride.³⁸

A similar miracle is in Mielot's collection, No. xxxviii.³⁹

It is unnecessary to add many examples of the mediæval tales in which Christ espouses an earthly maid,

³⁸ *Bonum univ. de apibus*, II, cap. xxix. 6; Herolt, *Promptuarium*, no. 38; Mussafia, II, p. 62, III, p. 46. Cf. also Ward-Herbert, II, pp. 634, 684; III, pp. 360, 527, 541, 614.

³⁹ Of remoter interest here is the following:

"How a clerk, taking shelter in a porch, found an image of the Virgin there, and placed a clasp upon its finger; how he afterwards saw in a church a second image of the Virgin with the same clasp on its finger; and how a voice from it taught him a new 'Gaude'." British Museum MS. Addit. 18929 (late thirteenth century), fol. 85; Ward, II, p. 659, no. 26; printed in Mone, *Lat. Hymnen des Mittelalters*, II, p. 169.

"German clerk has nothing else to offer at the mass of the Virgin but a broach which he meant for his sweetheart Mariota; the Virgin appears to him that night, wearing the broach and calling herself Mariota, and claiming his allegiance henceforth." British Museum MS. Sloane 2478 (early fourteenth century), fol. 6; Herbert, III, p. 513, no. 11. Cf. MS. Egerton 1117, no. 3, in which the clerk's offering is a silver necklace; Ward, II, p. 666. In MS. Addit. 32248 (which also contains the Clerk of Pisa) the clerk makes a pedestal for the image with branches of trees, and crowns it with flowers; Ward, II, p. 698, no. 17. Cf. also Herbert, III, p. 543, no. 20.

On the Girl of Arras cf. Ward-Herbert, II, p. 703, III, p. 661, etc.; Mussafia, I, pp. 28, 56.

An immoral monk is seized and thrown into a river by the Devil, but is rescued by Mary because he has been accustomed to say an *Ave Maria* whenever he passed her statue.—*Liber Exemplorum* (thirteenth century), ed. A. G. Little, Aberdeen, 1908, p. 32, no. 52.

or the Virgin chooses an earthly husband. They represent, says Toldo (p. 81) "un concetto puerile insieme e pagano che il Medio Evo aveva del cielo e in pari tempo spiegghino il rapido diffondersi della leggenda dell' anello, che, secondo ogni probabilità, ha origini orientali." The following story illustrates the Oriental side. That the idea originated in the East and was borrowed by the Western story-tellers cannot be proved; but it is equally probable that such a simple and natural conception would arise spontaneously and independently in East and West both.

Ananda, a follower of Buddha, wishes to abandon his divinity in order to marry a girl he loves and who loves him. Buddha seeing all other reasoning would be useless, takes him to heaven and shows him the celestial maidens, and asks if his lady is more beautiful than these. He lowers his head and signifies his disposition to live chastely the rest of his days, in order that, after this life, he may be united with a celestial maiden.⁴⁰

A few more Western examples will suffice. Jesus gave a ring as a symbol of betrothal to St. Catherine of Alexandria (ASS 25 Nov.), St. Margaret of Florence (ASS 26 Aug.) and St. Helen (ASS 23 April). In the *Specchio d'esempi* Jesus causes a girl to find three violets in a garden in the dead of winter and a ring representing two clasped hands as a sign that he regarded her as his spouse. And in the same work the Virgin, not wishing St. Edmund's devotion to pass unrecognized, accepted a ring he offered her and then returned it "con la salvation sua scritta in esso."⁴¹ Just before the birth of St. Robert of

⁴⁰ Kern, *Histoire de Bouddhisme*, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 1882, p. 164 (Toldo, l. c.).

⁴¹ Toldo, *op. cit.*, p. 81, n. 1, and p. 80. In the *De relationibus* of Alain de la Roche (ca. 1460), chap. iv (ed. 1691, p. 120 ff.) it is related that Mary gave a betrothal ring woven of her own hair to a monk who had been severely tempted by the Devil (H. Günter, *Legenden Studien*, Köln, 1906, p. 184).

Champagne the Virgin appeared to his mother Ermen-garde with a gold ring, saying she wished to be betrothed to him as soon as he was born (ASS 29 April). In spite of his unwillingness to accept, the Virgin promised to wed St. Herman of Cologne; on earth he was to represent Joseph, and in heaven he was to be with her (ASS 7 April). Mielot relates (No. LIX [LII]) a "miracle de l'enfant que fiança l'ymage de la vierge Marie." In the Braybrooke Collection of rings there is one of the fourteenth century with this inscription in Longobardic letters: "O cest anel seu espose de Jheusu Crist."⁴²

Moreover, the practice of heavenly marriages was not confined to saints' legends in the Middle Ages. Edmund Rich, who became archbishop of Canterbury in 1234, had as a young man made a vow of celibacy, and in order "that he might be able to keep it, he wedded himself to the mother of our Lord. He had two rings made with 'Ave Maria' engraved on each. One he placed on the finger of an image of the Virgin, which stood in a church at Oxford, and the other he wore on his own finger, considering himself espoused in this manner to the Virgin."⁴³ One of the daughters of King John vowed on the death of her husband to become the true spouse of Christ with a ring, but afterwards broke her vow to marry Simon de Montfort. The Lady Alice West, in her will dated 1395, left to her son Thomas among other things "a ring with whiche I was yspoused to God" during her widowhood.⁴⁴

From one point of view Toldo is correct in calling the idea of these supernatural marriages a "puerile conceit." But there is another point of view from which they must

⁴² William Jones, *Finger Ring Lore*, London, 1898, p. 240.

⁴³ Jones, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-8.

⁴⁴ Harrod, *Archæologia*, XL, part 2 (Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 241).

be regarded as something sacred and profound. The high mysticism which many men and women of the Middle Ages seem to have been capable of is not to be lightly repudiated as futile and insincere. The greater naturalness and simplicity of mediæval life in comparison with our own was conducive to a steadier kind of spirituality. Complete renunciation of the "world" was for many a constant ideal; and in the life of contemplation (with its inevitable echoes and memories of the life of the flesh) into which such extatic dreamers withdrew, a mystic marriage with the great and holy of their new world was both natural and necessary. The sexual depravity of mediæval monastic life is not for a moment to be denied or lost sight of, but it was not all so. There were some who could wholly and purely, without sham or self-deception, be united in a sacred union with Jesus or Mary; and for these, and indeed for all who could sympathetically comprehend their attitude, the stories of the Clerk of Pisa and of the ring on the image of Mary, with all their variants, would have a true and serious meaning. There were many men in the Middle Ages who had no doubt the Virgin Mary had appeared to them and spoken to them; and the Church was busy teaching those who had not enjoyed this miracle that it was possible to them also if they lived devoutly and obeyed the priest. Thus, while for the practical minded these divine marriages are a childish notion, for the mystics and the religious idealists they are a consummation of exalted contemplation and denial of the flesh. They may be amusing now, but in their day and for their purpose they were genuine reflections of human life.

We may now turn to study the probable relationship of all these tales which throughout the Middle Ages played so many variations on a few well-recognized themes. And

the discussion will be clearest if we begin with those which appear to be the simplest, that is, to contain the important motifs in the least complicated combination. The Venus story is the natural starting point; the Marriage of Mary with the ring its most obvious parallel; and the Clerk of Pisa, which is perhaps the simplest of all, occupies a middle ground between them, with important elements of each.⁴⁵ We may therefore begin conveniently with these three.

It is reasonably certain, though not demonstrable, that the Venus story is the earliest. Of the other two, the Clerk of Pisa appears to be the earlier; it dates certainly from before 1100. The story of the ring placed on the statue of the Virgin, or Marriage of Mary, does not occur, so far as we have direct evidence, before 1200; but by about 1225 (or earlier) Gautier de Coincy had already translated it from Latin into French. We may therefore assume with reasonable probability that it existed by 1200. But it is obvious that the meagre evidence we possess is entirely insufficient to form the basis of a sound argument for their genetic relations. And the fact that we have the Clerk of Pisa in a written form which antedates the earliest written form of the Marriage of Mary is of course inconclusive evidence of their relative date.

Let us assume, however, the priority of the Venus story. The conception of a statue endowed with certain human attributes is primitive, and pagan. The association of the classical gods with evil spirits, and the belief in the malevolent power of Venus, are early Christian ideas; but the story itself is Christian only in this remote back-

⁴⁵ With the Clerk of Pisa I here include its variant (or original) the Neglected Mary Image; for they represent the very same story. Whether the former is actually a more developed form of the latter I shall not pretend to say.

ground. The feeling and atmosphere of the story are pagan. When in the eleventh century the cult of the Virgin Mary began to make great strides, pious minds would look about for whatever could readily be adapted to the new worship, and it was inevitable that some one should see the potentialities of this tale of Venus and the ring. And yet how to make over the figure of a cruel goddess into something like the divine Virgin is not altogether obvious, unless there is some intermediate link to be used as a suggestion.⁴⁶

Let us assume again that before the transformation of the Venus statue to the Mary image took place the Clerk of Pisa was already known. This is a comparatively simple story of a youth devoted to the Virgin; he yields to the entreaties of his friends to marry, but on his wedding day the Virgin in a vision claims him as her own, and he abandons his marriage, accepts the love of Mary, and ends his life in her service. That is, a devout youth prefers the mystic marriage with the mother of Jesus to an earthly union—a very simple and useful motif for one who desired to encourage the growing Mary-cultus. And this simple motif was converted into a story by the device, equally simple, of a vision. One may grant, then, that the Clerk of Pisa may well have arisen as an independent narrative with the didactic purpose of advancing the worship of the Virgin.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ One recalls that William of Malmesbury was acquainted with both the Venus story and Love Obtained by the Black Arts, and yet William did not apparently regard the two as mutually related or suggestive one of the other.

⁴⁷ Mussafia conjectured that HM, the eleventh-century collection of Mary miracles which contains the earliest occurrence of the Clerk of Pisa was compiled in England. If this is so, the story must have already been in circulation; for an Englishman would not localize it in Pisa, and name the particular church, without special reason. Perhaps the tale had a remote basis of fact, or of local tradition.

Now it is noticeable that the whole interest of this story centres in the conclusion. The introduction is merely perfunctory: the young man has a natural inclination to celibacy and religion, but his friends urge him to marry. If one should replace this uninteresting introduction with something more lively—say, for example, the opening of the Venus story, the moral would be equally cogent, the narrative would be more attractive, and the whole would be *à fortiori* more effective. The connecting link between the two stories is this: when the young man is about to consummate his marriage with an earthly bride, the *other* betrothed appears to him in a vision and asserts her claim. With this incident as the middle term, how would the amalgamation take place?

The pagan story relates that to avoid injuring it while he is playing a game on his wedding day, a youth places his betrothal ring on the finger of a statue of Venus. When the game is finished he cannot get back his ring because the statue has bent its finger. That night he is prevented from consummating the marriage by an invisible obstacle, and Venus then appears to him and claims him as her own. Now, for *Venus* read *Mary*, for *invisible obstacle* read *sleep*, and add the conclusion of the Clerk of Pisa as I have outlined it in the last paragraph but one: “. . . claims him as her own, and he abandons his marriage, accepts the love of Mary, and ends his life in her service.” Here we have in all its essential details the *exemplum de clerico qui anulum suum in digito ymaginis beate virginis posuit*, the familiar miracle.

Perhaps one may say that this explanation, with all its simplicity is too ingenious. But there it is, at least possible, if not probable; and certainly natural. I do not claim anything more for it. It makes two preliminary assumptions, first that the Venus story preceded the others in

point of time, and second that the Clerk of Pisa was earlier than the Marriage of Mary. Both these assumptions are in agreement with the facts so far as we can recover them; and so the internal evidence harmonizes with the external and supports it, though neither is conclusive by itself. Their combined force, however, produces what I should like to call a sufficient probability. In the nature of the case no stronger argument is practicable, and no closer approach to certainty is possible.

The Bachelor of Rome appears to be an independent adaptation of the Venus story to the Virgin worship. It is more complex than the usual Marriage of Mary, and closer to its original, and does not seem to have been so popular. The malevolent image is not called Venus, but it behaves precisely like the Venus statue of Malmesbury's version. The incidents are substantially the same until the Bachelor of Rome takes steps to break the spell. In the earlier tale the hero turns to Palumbus, a converted necromancer; here, after getting no help from the Pope, he tries a pious hermit who makes him a devotee of the Virgin. Then the vision motif is repeated, Our Lady taking the place of Venus. Finally his devotion to the Virgin earns him the reward of his prayers. But in both tales Palumbus and the hermit have the same rôle: they put the Roman youth on the right path to regain his ring.

With Gautier's story there can hardly be any real relationship. While in many respects the Bachelor of Rome is a better and more interesting narrative, it has not the simplicity of outline and effective directness of Gautier's version. The latter carries the adaptation one step further in merging the figure of Venus and that of Mary; and thus the plot is relieved of the repetition of the two vision incidents and of the suspense in which the bachelor seeks for the right advice but still hesitates to carry out

the Virgin's commands. The dénouement of Gautier's version is therefore swifter and more pointed, and the whole is better adapted for exemplum or didactic use. But the elements of unlikeness between the two with reference to their common source are such as seem to preclude any theory that the Bachelor of Rome was somehow an intermediate step between the Venus story and the Marriage of Mary. The Bachelor follows its source as closely as is consistent with its religious *raison d'être*; while the very points of similarity between the Marriage of Mary and the Venus story are points of dissimilarity between it and the Bachelor of Rome. It can therefore hardly be a question of the latter's being the source or model of the Marriage of Mary. Of course it is possible, notwithstanding, that if the Bachelor of Rome existed before 1200 it may have given some one the suggestion of combining the story of Venus and the Clerk of Pisa with the purpose of advancing the cult of the Virgin; but there is no reason to suppose such an early date for it.

The story of Love Obtained by the Black Arts is certainly a developed form of the Clerk of Pisa type, and probably was based on some early version of the latter before it became localized in Pisa. The two are fundamentally the same in dénouement, except that in the simpler story the Virgin appears immediately to the clerk and addresses him directly, while in Love by the Black Arts he falls asleep and has a vision. Where they differ is in the introduction. One is straightforward and almost bare, the other is elaborated with diabolic obsession and dealings in necromancy. This fuller introduction involves of course minor changes in the latter parts of the story, but it does not affect the principal incident or the climax, unless perhaps to overshadow it slightly. Indeed, the very fact that the interest of the reader is aroused at once, that

the story does not depend for its appeal entirely on the vision and sudden conversion of the clerk, that thus the miraculous element is subordinated, is evidence that *Love Obtained by the Black Arts* is an elaboration of the simpler *Pisa* story.

There is no need to attempt a schematic outline of the relations of the miscellaneous variants. I have included them above as an indication of the popularity of the themes with mediæval story-tellers and listeners. It is of interest to find the old ideas in new connexions and combinations. And in the unadorned narratives of the Middle Ages one can easily see the same working and reworking, the same shuffling and reshuffling, of a few simple motifs or incidents which it requires greater analysis to recognize in the more sophisticated fiction of the present, but which are equally manifest to the student.

Sometime during those transitional centuries, then, between the Christianization of Rome and the opening of the mediæval period there came into being a strange story of a young Roman who unintentionally betrothed himself to a statue of Venus, the demon-goddess, by placing his marriage ring on its finger; who was persecuted by the malevolent and jealous image; and finally obtained release by means of a necromancer. This story enjoyed a considerable currency in the Middle Ages, and being transformed into a miracle of the Virgin attained a tremendously increased popularity. It is not one of the finest examples of mediæval narrative art. It never attracted any of the more skilful story writers—one wishes Chaucer had taken it down from the lips of one of the Canterbury pilgrims (the Clerk, say, might have told it on the way back to London); it never received anything like literary interpretation. But the fact that it has continued to com-

mand the interest of readers since the Renaissance is a proof of its intrinsic worth as a story.

During the Middle Ages it led a double life. But while its *other* manifestation passed out of common currency along with the bulk of mediæval miracles of the Virgin, its original form has maintained itself, and has at length from the hands of Mérimée won its literary laurels.

III

The old traditions of Venus as a love-demon have naturally attracted many modern writers, and there are several interesting poems and tales based on this idea of the supernatural powers of the transformed goddess, but they are pertinent here only when they contain actual reminiscences of the statue-and-ring motif. Eichendorff's very pretty romantic story, *Das Marmorbild*, is eminently successful in suggesting an atmosphere in which our disbelief in enchantment and diabolic influence is very willingly suspended: the whole tale is so conducted that the reader hardly knows, until the author carefully disillusion him at the end, which of Florio's friends and which of the lovely gardens and palaces are real and which are imaginary. Here Venus appears sometimes as a marble statue, but there is no ring-betrothal.¹

Eichendorff returned, however, to this same theme in his narrative poem *Julian* (1853), in which the Emperor Julian pledges himself to the ancient gods by placing a

¹ Eichendorff, in a letter to Fouqué (Dec. 2, 1817) explained that he took the hint for this story from Happel's *Curiositates*; see the extract in Koch's introduction to *Das Marmorbild* in Kürschner's *Deutsche National-Litteratur*, 146, II, 2, pp. 157 ff. Koch mentions other stories and poems which involve a similar theme. The German critics find a sort of literary allegory in Eichendorff's tale. On Happel's version of Venus and the ring see above, p. 529.

ring on the finger of a Venus statue—"Ich grüss' als Braut dich!" It is a long poem, in various metres, and has some interest for its narrative vigor, but none for its handling of the supernatural.

Among the Juvenile Poems of Tom Moore is a ballad in sixty-two quatrains called *The Ring*. Here the youth's name is Rupert, the bride's Isabel, the necromancer's Austin. Moore probably intended it to be of the 'simple and stirring' variety. To apologize for its badness by hoping it may have been intended as a burlesque is futile. The last stanza is a fair example of its qualities:

He took the ring, the rabble pass'd,
He home return'd again;
His wife was then the happiest fair,
The happiest he of men.

The German poet Franz Freiherr von Gaudy has a prose rifacimento of the Malmesbury version in his *Venetianische Novellen* (1838). At Verona, in the time of Can Signorio della Scala, young Ottaviano Sagramoso is betrothed to the lovely Vergogna, a daughter of the Castellani family, which has long been hostile to the Sagramosi. The setting is elaborate, some of the incidents are happily expanded, and the Montague-Capulet motif adds a certain interest to the situation. On the whole, Gaudy's *Frau Venus* is a respectable though hardly a distinguished retelling of the old tale.²

Mérimée's *Vénus d'Ille* (1837) is an extraordinarily fine short-story, and as an example of the possibilities of

²G. W. H. Häring (1798-1871), who wrote under the name of Willibald Alexis, published in the *Taschenbuch für Damen* for 1828 a *Venus in Rom* (also in *Gesammelte Novellen*, III, Berlin, 1831), which I believe is the story of the statue and the ring; but I have been unable to obtain a copy of it. (Cf. Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung*, IX, pp. 436, 466.)

terror in fiction deserves closer study than would be appropriate here. One may compare it with Henry James's *The Last of the Valerii*, in which also there is an antique statue which exercises a power of evil in the modern world. It has been said that without a malignant woman for inspiration Mérimée had no talent; here he has another element of success: fear of the supernatural. His immediate source has not been discovered; but that is of little importance. While following generally the outline of the old story, he has made it completely his own; he has given it a vigor, an intensity, a life which none of the other versions possesses. For concentration and heightening of effect he has omitted the Palumbus incident, the nocturnal procession, and the return of the ring, and placed the tragic consequence where it is most true and impressive artistically, not on Palumbus, but on the bridegroom; thus at the same time simplifying the narrative and increasing its dramatic power. The bronze Venus of Ille is more distinctly than in any of the earlier redactions of the story the ancient love goddess become a malicious demon. And perhaps the most significant characteristic of Mérimée's handling is the boldness with which he placed the old material in the full light of modern life.³

In the Fourth Part of *The Earthly Paradise* (1870)

³ Cf. Augustin Filon, *Mérimée et ses amis*, Paris, 1894, p. 98.

Mr. Arthur Symons, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, New York, 1919, pp. 58 ff., interprets Mérimée's story rather differently; and indeed finds a "spiritual meaning," which Mérimée rejected, in the mediæval story:—"The ring which the bridegroom sets on the finger of Venus and which the statue's finger closes upon, accepting it, symbolizes the pact between love and sensuality, the lover's abdication of all but the physical part of love."

Mérimée's *Vénus d'Ille* was translated into English by Edgar Saltus, in *Tales before Supper*, Brentano's, 1887; cf. C. Van Vechten, *The Merry-go-round*, New York, 1918, p. 58.

Morris retold the story, not without a certain charm, to be sure, but with none of the skill and subtlety of Mérimée's version. Morris did little more than expand, with poetical embellishments, the mediæval tale of Malmesbury and the chroniclers. The scene is on the coast of England; the hero is Lawrence, a wealthy merchant who has been in the East; the magician is Palumbus, an old friend of the bride's father. The whole effect of this version is one of dilution. There are upwards of thirteen hundred lines, but the actual story is slight. The descriptions are often good, but almost never excellent. Though he makes many obvious attempts, only once does Morris produce the mysterious atmosphere of the supernatural—when the cloudy column closed round the youth and

It was as though his lips were kissed.

The different groups of the nocturnal procession, suggesting vaguely the companies in Chaucer's *House of Fame*, are fairly vivid and interesting, but the vision as a whole fails to make a really great impression. And throughout the poem Morris displays all the weaknesses that are natural to the short narrative couplet, lack of concentration and intensity, loose grammatical structure, and rime-padding. There is apparently no effort at characterization, and though many of the ornamental passages are pleasing and pretty enough, the story itself is hardly more moving than in the bare mediæval versions.

In absolute contrast to Eichendorff's story, which hovers in a misty mid-region whence it is almost natural to cross into the adjoining world of spirits, and to Mérimée's masterpiece, which brings the supernatural into a mysterious but poignant relation with everyday life, is *The Tinted Venus: a Farcical Romance* (1885), of F. Anstey (Thomas Anstey Guthrie). Here we are obliged to sus-

pend disbelief because the supernatural is interwoven into a very realistic pattern of London life, and because the story is only an extraordinarily clever farce. There is no apparent effort to make the supernatural seem probable, but after our first shock at the disappearance of the statue from its pedestal and its reappearance in the omnibus we are no more inclined to question the right of the goddess to appear in the story than was Leander himself. The figures of the (in Victorian phrase) middle-lower-class Londoners are sufficiently lifelike, especially in the Dickensian scene of the Sunday dinner. We accept Mr. Tweddle and his friends because they are natural and amusing; we accept the august imperious divinity because Mr. Tweddle accepts her and because she is part of the farce. In two chapter headings (III and IX) Anstey quotes from *The Earthly Paradise*; in Chapter VIII Mr. Freemoult, the scholar whom Leander consults on the antecedent history of his deity, says that the story of the ring occurs in *The Earthly Paradise* and also in Burton's *Anatomy*; and the mention of a tennis game and a bronze statue shows that Anstey probably knew Mérimée's version as well.

It is far from Anstey's farcical novelette to Mérimée's study of terror and malignant jealousy, and farther still to the miracle of the Clerk of Pisa and the simple tale of William of Malmesbury, yet they are all one story; they have in common the situation of a bridegroom pursued by a jealous divinity on whose finger he has slipped a marriage ring; and what is important is not so much to compare this with any example whatsoever of an immortal interfering with a mortal lover, or of a person committing an imprudent act which brings on serious consequences, as to observe what meanings, what effects are obtained from this situation. The mediæval story-tellers were in

the main too unskilled and too unliterary to make it mean anything in particular; they repeated it merely as a good tale. The Maryolaters, on the other hand, saw an opportunity to adapt it to holy uses, and changed the malevolent Venus to an equally jealous and importunate Mary acting, however, with benevolent intent. The modern writers have perceived its latent possibilities—Eichendorff for dreamy romanticism, Morris for poetical narrative (though his work is hardly an artistic success), Mérimée for characterization and terror, and Anstey for farce. One by one the undeveloped mediæval tales are coming into their own. This one of the ring and the statue may be said to have arrived.

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